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CHRISTIAN LIFE AND BELIEF

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND BELIEF

A Description and Defence of the Gospel

BY

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UNTO THE SAINTS."

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PREFACE.

The writer never formed the plan of writing this book, but he has been led to publish it step by step. Two years ago he delivered two courses of lectures to the Y.M.C.A., Strand, on "Christ's Person and Work" and "God and Man," and this last winter a course to the Y.M.C.A., Aldersgate, on "The Christian Life." When asked by the Editor of the *British Congregationalist* to contribute a series of articles in confirmation of the Christian faith in the midst of the difficulties and doubts of to-day, he set about condensing these lectures within the limits of the space assigned. Soon after the publication of the articles began, several offers for their issue in book form came to him. Regarding these offers as an indication that such a book would meet a want widely felt, he decided, though reluctantly, to comply with the request, and is grateful to the Editor of the *British Congregationalist* for his assent to the publication of these articles. It gives him pleasure to issue the book through the Publication Department of the Congregational Union of England and Wales as a recognition of its claim for the loyal support of Congregationalists.

The articles appear in this book with as little alteration as possible. For while in some respects all would bear considerable expansion; yet it is not a big book, which only scholars and theologians would read, that the writer wishes to offer; but one that will be within the reach of, and be read by, the ministers and members of the Congregational Churches generally. It is because he desires to be helpful to as wide a circle as possible that he has left the articles in their present form.

The book makes no pretensions to present a complete theological system. It seeks simply and briefly to describe what the Christian life is, as it is commonly understood in the Christian Churches with which the writer stands in closest relations, and to defend against doubts and difficulties of to-day the Christian belief which seems essential to the birth and growth of the Christian life. The intention throughout is practical, the preservation and progress of Christian experience and character, as the writer's one desire is to be the helper of the Christian faith and life of all who with him are "in Christ."

New College,
January 13th, 1911.

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CHAPTER I.

SIN AND REPENTANCE.

PART I.

CHRISTIAN LIFE.

I.—SIN AND REPENTANCE.

JOHN, the forerunner of Jesus, "preached the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins." Jesus Himself announced that remission, and also summoned men to repentance. Were John and Jesus alike mistaken as to the beginning of the Christian life? The question seems forced upon us by some modern representations of Christianity, in which the sense of sin is dismissed as morbid, and the forgiveness is taken as a matter of course. Yet over against this fashion of the hour we can set not only the authority of Jesus, although that should be enough, but also the general testimony of Christian experience. The blessing the Gospel offers first of all, and most of all, is the forgiveness of sins. Would that be a boon to man of which he had no need? The necessity of forgiveness implies the reality of sin, and the reality of sin justifies the call to repentance, in which Jesus continued the ministry of His forerunner.

(1) Sin is a term which belongs to the realm of religion; it implies a disturbance of the relation between man and God. Not alone in the Hebrew religion, the promise, and the Christian religion, the fulfilment, is it recognised that man's conduct affects his dealings with the divine. While it must be admitted that in many religions ceremonial offences are incongruously mixed up with those that we regard as distinctively moral, yet these offences are regarded as disobedience to the God or gods worshipped, incurring the divine displeasure. We have instances in the Egyptian Book of the Dead or the Babylonian Penitential Psalms. What in its legal aspect is crime, and in its moral, vice, is in its religious, sin.

Sin in its Christian sense is not merely disobedience to divine law; for such a view would fall short of the Christian conception of God. God is not only the Moral Governor of Mankind. He is the Father. Wherever in any measure divine love towards mankind is recognised, then distrust of that love must be also regarded as sin. Not to have faith in God's goodness as well as not to do His holy will is sin. In the full Christian sense not to love God is sin. Neglect of personal communion with Him and defiance of His moral order come under the same judgment. To distrust and disobey God is to be religiously and morally separated from, and even

opposed to, God, and to be thus estranged from God cannot but involve a disturbance of God's fatherly relation to man, as it is a disturbance of man's childlike relation to God.

Without ascribing to God any imperfect passion, we may affirm that, while God's love does not cease, and cannot change, yet to fulfil its own ends that love must deal otherwise with those who scorn it than with those who give it welcome and make answer to it. There are consequences in the outer and the inner life of this estrangement from God, which we may call the penalty of sin, while the liability to these consequences may be called its guilt. We do not think of a stern Lawgiver or an angry Judge, but of a holy Father, who cannot impart, who must withhold the fullest blessings of His love from those who despise it or defy its holy restraints and constraints. It is assumed in the Christian view that man is free to trust and obey God; that it is by his own choice he distrusts and disobeys; and that, therefore, he is blameworthy, and deserves punishment for his estrangement from God. A subsequent chapter will offer the justification of the assumption.

(2) The reality of sin, as thus described, is testified by the human consciousness. Men have, as a fact, felt themselves sinful, guilty, punished; not a few religious fanatics, but a multitude of men of

varied cultures, different characters, and opposed beliefs have shared this experience. This sense has been to many an intolerable burden, a pursuing fury, an unceasing torment. How often has the world's greatest literature dealt with remorse? Shakespeare's "Macbeth" and Hawthorne's "The Scarlet Letter" may be mentioned as two notable instances.

This common experience of the reality of sin is not dependent on, or affected by, the theory of the origin of sin which may be held. It is much to be regretted that evangelical theology, till recently, gave to the story of the Fall in Genesis iii. a prominence which it has not in the New Testament. In His Gospel Jesus describes man as lost, but not once does He account for man's present condition by his descent from Adam. While Paul held the common belief, it is not the basis of his argument for the universality of sin in the Epistle to the Romans. The allusion in Romans v. to the disobedience of Adam is made in an argument for the greater efficacy of Christ's grace than Adam's sin. The confession of sin in Psalm li. does not base the reality of the sin confessed on any theory of its origin. Frankly accepting the modern standpoint, on the one hand, in regard to the evolution of mankind, and, on the other hand, in regard to the literary character of the narrative in Genesis, we

can affirm the reality of sin as strongly and firmly to-day as the moral conscience and the religious consciousness have ever done. It is an experience of the present and not a tradition of the past that is here the constant, universal witness.

(3) It is sometimes affirmed that there is a great difference between Jesus and Paul as regards their teaching about man's sinfulness. It is true that on the one hand Jesus did not know in His own soul the hopeless and helpless struggle against indwelling sin which Paul has so vividly and tragically described in Romans vii., and that, on the other hand, he was never brought into immediate contact with the moral abominations of paganism in the Roman Empire, which Paul, in Romans i., so relentlessly denounces. Yet surely Paul's rebuke of Jewish self-satisfaction in Romans ii. has its counterpart in Jesus' denunciation, of the Scribes and the Pharisees; and Jesus' description of man as lost, and, therefore, needing to be sought and saved by Him, as sick, and needing to be cured, affirms the reality of sin from the standpoint of the Saviour, even as Paul's language from the point of view of the sinner saved.

It is sometimes maintained that the whole Gospel is to be found in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. This is not so; but, if it were, sin and forgiveness are the two poles of the narrative. Is there a story

that comes nearer to and touches more tenderly the common heart of mankind than the story in Luke vii. of the sinful woman who loved much because forgiven much? That Jesus offered and assured men of forgiveness shows that in His judgment men needed forgiveness. If sin does not disturb man's relation to God, what need of its restoration by forgiveness?

Even if the saying about the giving of His life as a ransom for many is too obscure to be confidently appealed to, there can be no doubt that in the institution of the Lord's Supper Jesus did affirm a connection between His death and the forgiveness of sin. If the common apostolic tradition that He died for our sins, according to the Scripture, thus rests on Jesus' own teaching, then Jesus' consciousness in regard to His death, as revealed in the agony in the Garden and the desolation of the Cross, affirms the reality of sin. To the writer at least the experience of Jesus in Gethsemane and Calvary is inexplicable, unless Jesus, by His love for mankind, so felt the sin of mankind as a burden, as to be Himself almost overwhelmed. The reality of sin, not only as man feels it, but as God knows it, can be measured only by the reality of the sacrifice by which alone the Son of God could save.

(4) If Gethsemane and Calvary show how Jesus in love to God and man felt about man's sin, how should the sinful feel? The writer of the fifty-first

Psalm recognised that the sinner seeking forgiveness must bring to God the sacrifice of a broken and a contrite heart. The writer of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah described the passion of the righteous not for his own sins, but for the sins of his people. There is a sorrow for sin that men have felt to be altogether fitting. With the shallow soul there may be only regret at the evil consequences incurred; with every deeper soul there is a grief, which, apart from the comfort of the Gospel, may sink into remorse. Even those who know that comfort have cried for pardon out of the depths of the soul's agony. The reality of the experience of many of the saints need not be doubted, even if there have been artificial imitations in a merely forced penitence. While there is a danger of emotional excess in the religious life, and there may be a straining of the feelings in repentance which cannot be otherwise regarded than as morbid, yet what we need to-day is rather the keen sense of sin and the deep feeling of penitence.

It is a mistake, however, to emphasise the emotional aspect of repentance to the neglect of the intellectual and the volitional aspects. On the one hand there must be a distinct and accurate conception of the nature of sin and its consequences, of the antagonism of God to sin, and of the necessity of a thorough abandonment of sin in surrender

to God. There must be a change of mind; the thoughts must be enlightened by the truth of God to think truly of sin. On the other hand, there must be a deliberate and effective decision of the will to turn from sin to God, to renounce sin and to submit to God. The emotion without the conception lacks root, the emotion without the volition lacks fruit. Unstable in the one case, it will be futile in the other. To see clearly, to feel keenly, to choose firmly, all this belongs to repentance. The danger to-day is probably to lay all the stress on the volition, to suspect the emotion, and to be uncertain about the conception in repentance. It is admitted that many men need an amendment of their habits and an improvement of their character. What is ignored is that such a change can be brought about only by the force of a deep and strong emotion, to use Dr. Chalmers' phrase, "the expulsive power of a new affection," and that such an emotion cannot be stimulated by conjectures but only by a certainty that captures the reason and commands the conscience.

(5) In the call of the Baptist and of Jesus to repentance these elements are all recognised. That the Messiah and his forerunner alike stirred the depths of the religious feeling of the Jewish multitude the Gospels show. The account Luke gives of the way in which the Baptist directed the

emotion so stirred into the practical channels of the faithful discharge of the duties of each man's vocation throws the volitional aspect of repentance into the foreground. All Jesus' teaching, too, was ethical. The result of the repentance to which He summoned was to be a righteousness that exceeded the righteousness of Scribes and Pharisees, even a righteousness that sought to reproduce the divine perfection. Many who emphasise Jesus' moral teaching as the best gift to mankind ignore that repentance was in the mind of Jesus Himself the first condition of the possibility of His ideal being ever realised. The Sermon on the Mount describes the fruits worthy of the repentance to which Jesus called men.

Clear, too, was John the Baptist's presentation of the conception that awakened the emotion. He assumed the teaching of the Old Testament regarding the day of Jehovah, the day of judgment. It was with reference to the coming of the Kingdom of God that he made the summons. While Jesus takes up this idea, yet, as we now look back upon His teaching, it is the Fatherhood of God revealed by Him, which offers the most convincing argument why men should turn from sin to God. Distrust of and disobedience to the heavenly Father, perfect in love, is the Christian conception of sin, which moves the heart to Christian penitence. It is

God's love that is sin's condemnation, and it is God's love which draws the sinner in like manner to condemn his sin.

(6) Paul conceives repentance as crucifixion with Christ. It will be necessary to return to this conception in dealing with Christian communion with Christ; at present we must note how it enlarges the idea of repentance. Christ on His Cross both saw sin as God sees it, and felt sin as man feels it. His agony and desolation were due to the blending of the human experience which, in His love, He shared, and the divine vision, which His union with God secured to Him. His was not merely a perfect human penitence, in so far as we may apply the term to the sorrow of the sinless for the sin of the race with which He made Himself one in love. His was also a perfect divine judgment, as the Son perfectly knew the Father. His knowledge of, sorrow for, judgment on sin is the perfect ideal, of which Christian penitence is meant to be more and more a realisation, so that we come to experience with Him what He experienced for us.

CHAPTER II.

FAITH AND FORGIVENESS.

II.—FAITH AND FORGIVENESS.

JESUS, in His preaching, called men not only to repent, but also to believe, for the Christian life has, and cannot but have, a twofold movement. There must be renunciation of sin, and there must be reception from God. The back must be turned to sin, and the face must be lifted up to God. As repentance is the soul's severance from sin, so faith is its attachment to God, but that attachment to God has reference to the sin from which there is a severance. Faith claims forgiveness of the sin which has been judged in repentance. This is the distinctive Christian sense of faith. This is the sense in which Jesus uses the word when He assures the sinful woman, "Thy faith hath saved thee," because "Thy sins are forgiven." It is forgiveness that the grace of God in Christ offers and that the faith of man claims.

(1) As faith is not exercised only in claiming forgiveness, and is not even confined to the realm of religion, we must first of all define it as

accurately as possible from the psychological standpoint. Faith involves the exercise of the entire personality as thought, feeling, will, and it is adequately described only by the use of the three terms—belief, trust and surrender. Faith is an *intellectual* function of the personality. There is teaching or testimony which, known and understood, is believed as truth; and in belief, which may be used to fix the thought element in faith, there is, besides knowledge and understanding, a feeling of confidence that what is known and understood is true. Thus faith is also an *emotional* function of the personality. What is believed brings peace to the heart. Jesus added to His assurance, "Thy faith hath saved thee," the command, "Go in peace." The truth believed brings a calm to the storm-tossed soul. Fear gives place to trust. Again, trust is not feeling only, for in trust there is volition as well as emotion. The self commits itself to the truth or the person trusted. The test of belief and trust is action. Does the conduct correspond with the truth believed? Does the character conform to the person trusted? If not, we may doubt the sincerity of the belief and the reality of the trust. The truth, or the person who gains the belief of the mind or the trust of the heart will also win the surrender of the will. Paul expresses reality when he speaks of "the obedience of faith."

(2) Faith thus described is exercised in all the realms of man's interest and effort, but we are at present concerned only with religious faith. What is the object of religious faith generally? That object is described in Hebrews xi. 1. "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen." Faith makes the invisible as real as the visible, and the future as certain as the present. Thus faith in the religious realm, because of its object, gains a fuller content. Faith may be exercised in relation to objects known by sense. There is belief in the existence of other persons because there is sensible evidence of sight and hearing. But as regards God there is not such direct sensible evidence, although there is a legitimate inference from the things seen to His power, wisdom, and even goodness. Hence, faith in religion is not belief, trust, surrender in relation to data given in sensible perception, but is what we may call the spiritual sense, apprehending, appreciating, and appropriating the realities of which sense cannot offer the evidence.

But, lacking any sensible evidence, can there be any certainty of such realities? There is here, too, certainty, but it is more closely bound up with the personality, the moral character, and the religious aspirations, than the certainty of the sensible. Man has a consciousness of ideals of truth, beauty,

holiness, love, to be realised in himself, and it is in the measure in which these ideals possess the supreme value for Him that he exercises faith that all these ideals are already reality in God, and will yet become reality in him. As man values the invisible and the future are these realities for his faith.

In all religions do we find belief in gods and ghosts, that is, faith in supersensible existences, however crudely conceived, and in man's own continued existence, however vaguely imagined. This belief is not detached from conduct. Man's behaviour does affect his relation to the gods and the conditions of his future life. While this feature is not equally developed in all religions, yet we can affirm that the progress of the religious consciousness is conditioned by the influence of the moral conscience. While ceremonial offences are often mixed up with moral transgressions in the conception of sin, yet it is a widespread belief that the gods punish sin in this life, and that even the life beyond will be affected by behaviour in this life. Faith includes not only belief in gods and ghosts, but also belief in sin as bringing punishment and needing forgiveness.

(3) In the Hebrew religion the belief in gods becomes belief in one God; the belief in ghosts becomes, though slowly, belief in a resurrection, a

final judgment, a separation of good and evil for the reward of the one and the punishment of the other. The sense of sin becomes more distinctly moral; the need of forgiveness is more keenly felt, and, as God comes to be known as holy love, is more confidently expected. Even in the Hebrew religion faith is more and more fixed on God's grace for the salvation of man.

Of this promise the fulfilment is in Christ. It is the grace of God in Christ, that is, God's love in Him stooping to, seeking, suffering for, and thus saving the sinful, which is received in Christian faith. This being its object, it is evident that Christian faith is inseparable from repentance, as there must be "a change of mind" regarding sin, a judging it, sorrowing for it, turning from it, if the need of forgiveness is to be felt and the gift of forgiveness is to be welcomed. But, on the other hand, what distinguishes the Christian Gospel is that the offer of forgiveness comes before the repentance of man. Under the old covenant the contrite hoped for forgiveness; under the new covenant God in His grace in Christ presses forgiveness on man to awaken his penitence and faith, and some faith there is in this grace before there can be any penitence.

(4) Forgiveness is the divine removal of the human sin which has interrupted the communion of God

and man. What needs to be removed, that forgiveness may be complete, is the guilt, the power, and the love of sin. It has been not uncommon to limit the meaning of forgiveness to the cancelling of the guilt of sin, the discharge of man's liability to suffer the punishment of sin; but in thus regarding forgiveness, attention is fixed on the secondary consequences of sin to the neglect of its primary effect, the estrangement of man from God, the separation of the life of man from the life of God, the interruption of the fellowship of man and God. If forgiveness be the removal of this condition in the restoration of man's moral and spiritual union with God, then it is evident that forgiveness is not complete unless, in the cancelling of the guilt of sin, there is also a breaking of its power, and a casting out of the love of it. This needs to be insisted on, as there has been an evangelism which has assured men that they are no longer liable to the penalty of sin without insisting on the necessity of the moral change of deliverance from sin's bondage, and the religious change of devotion to God alone. The dissection in the theology of our fathers of the Christian salvation into justification and sanctification, as though the one were separable from the other, is a putting asunder of what God has joined together. Our thought may distinguish what our life must not divide. Justification has necessarily

in it the promise and the power of sanctification. Forgiveness is the beginning of holiness.

There is a close connection between the guilt, the power, and the love of sin. The sense of guilt, of separation from the perfect God, brings moral impotence. The sinner, feeling himself alone without God in his life, feels himself helpless to struggle against the evil that besets him. In losing God he loses heart and hope, but if he feels himself thus encompassed by sin, and feels no competing aspiration towards God, his affections will cling more and more to the evil that thus enthrals him, and to which he feels less and less that there is any rival. Let him, however, be assured of the love of God, he then dares to believe that there is a grace of God sufficient for him, a strength of God made perfect in his weakness, and the hope of escape from the bondage of sin loosens its hold on his heart, and brings into his soul "the expulsive power of the new affection" for God in Christ.

(5) But from the standpoint of modern thought there may be doubt regarding the possibility of forgiveness as so thorough and great an inward change. To human life even the principle of causality is being rigorously applied. What a man is each moment is said to be the effect of all his past, and his present the cause of all his future. Not a link in that chain can be weakened or broken.

He that is holy will be holy still, and he that is filthy will be filthy still. This denial puts an unwarranted limitation on the freedom alike of God and man, and in our explanation of the change we must be careful to recognise both. God is not free to force His forgiveness on man without man's choice, neither can man recover himself without the grace of God. However bad the character of a man may appear to other men to be, we have no right to affirm that he cannot repent and believe. The character as known to others, as known to himself even, does not exhaust his personality. There are reserves of the moral and the spiritual, which can be called forth and brought into play on the field of consciousness from the soul's hidden depths by the truth and the grace of God. Neither is God bound to treat a man according to what his character at the moment is. He may in grace approach and appeal to him as the better self that is yet to be. God may deal with a man not according to his actuality, but according to his possibility. If the sinner could never be anything else than a sinner, forgiveness in the sense of God's treating him as not sinful would be impossible. While what man may by grace become is not the reason for God's forgiveness, yet it is the ground of its possibility.

But even if we could not give such an indication of the possibility, we should not be compelled to

give up the reality of forgiveness. The historical testimony to this experience is so abundant and so varied that the fact might be confidently asserted against all the intellectual difficulties which can be urged. Men have passed out of darkness into God's marvellous light. The despair of the sinner has been changed into the delight of the child of God.

This change has been wrought by the grace of God in Christ Jesus. The wonder and the glory of this divine act may be obscured, however, by a common assumption to-day that, whenever a man changes for the better, it follows as a matter of course that he recovers his fellowship with God. A man changes, God does not. The constant disposition of God to be good to all men is simply recognised by man. If this be all, there is not the necessity of forgiveness in the sense in which the fact of forgiveness has always been understood in the Christian Church, as the act of God in restoring to fellowship with Himself the penitent and believing sinner. It must be insisted that while God's disposition of love is not changed, the very constancy of that love as holy requires that his dealing with men shall be affected by their moral condition. The same love as delights in the saint's goodness must be displeased with the sinner's continuance in evil. If God be a loving person and not an abstract law, His will must freely, in

accordance with His perfection, determine His personal relations to men. It is an act of God's grace that raises the sinner to be the son.

While such forgiveness must follow penitence and faith, in *the Person and Work of Christ* (to which we must afterwards return) God himself makes the approach and the appeal to sinful mankind. He reveals Himself in Christ as holy love, and thus pronounces judgment on the sin of which he offers forgiveness. How much God hates the sin of man, and how much God loves man, though sinful, both facts are disclosed in the Cross of Jesus Christ. If not every Christian, yet most of the saints and seers of the Church have been made sure of their forgiveness and aware of God's judgment on their sin in the Cross of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER III.

REGENERATION AND CONVERSION.

III.—REGENERATION AND CONVERSION.

In discussing repentance and faith we have been considering the human factors in the moral and religious change whereby the Christian life is begun. It is from sin that man experiences repentance; it is for forgiveness that he exercises faith. God offers and man thus welcomes forgiveness, or the renewal of the fellowship of God as Father and man as child. But this is by no means a complete account of God's action in bringing man to Himself. The first approach and appeal is from God's side, not man's. Repentance and faith are not man's unaided work; but God works in man by His Spirit, so that he is enabled to repent and believe. This change, as effected by God's working in man is called regeneration, as conditioned by the exercise of man's will, conversion. It is necessary that these two conceptions should be clearly distinguished, even though the realities expressed cannot be separated. God works in man, and man chooses for God; and the one cannot be without the other.

(1) In God we live and move and have our being;

we are His creatures, dependent for our existence and continuance on the Creator. In Him is life, and His life is the light of men. In reason and conscience He is the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. But it is not with this universal operation of God in man with which we are now concerned. It is with God's working in the Christian experience that our thought is now engaged. In the Christian revelation and redemption God makes Himself known, and gives Himself to men as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The doctrine of the Trinity is the theological interpretation of the fulness and manifoldness of God's self-disclosure and self-communication to men in Jesus Christ. As we must think that God is what He makes known and gives as Himself to men, the nature of God cannot but be thought by us as triune, even as His revelation is.

It is the Father who forgives, but He draws near and offers His gift to men in the Grace of Christ, His only begotten and well-beloved Son. That grace is historic fact, but also spiritual reality. Christ was, and Christ is still, the Revealer of God and Redeemer of men. Christ now dwells and works in the inmost life of man, in the mind, the heart, and the will, through the Spirit enlightening, quickening, renewing. But the Spirit's work is no mysterious influence, which may be experienced,

but cannot be conceived; it is the historic fact of the Grace of Christ in revealing God as Father and redeeming men from sin that the Spirit applies to the soul of man to evoke repentance and to stimulate faith. While we most gladly recognise a working of the Spirit of God in the life of man even where the Gospel is not preached, yet the distinctively and adequately Christian repentance and faith are due to the working of the Spirit in and with the Word of the Cross. It is as a man is enlightened by the Spirit to behold Christ in His grace, as he is quickened to feel his need of salvation, as he is strengthened to surrender himself to the Divine Saviour and Lord, that he experiences the new birth, that he is regenerated by the Spirit.

(2) As the working of the Holy Spirit is a divine working in man, it is so inward within the inmost being of man, in his thoughts, feelings, wishes and choices, that it cannot be clearly distinguished from man's own spiritual life. As the Spirit is God's most immediate and intimate presence and operation in man, there cannot be so distinct a conception of the Spirit dwelling and working within as of the Son presented in the historical personality of Jesus Christ. When men are exhorted to realise the personality of the Spirit as distinct from that of the Son on the one hand, or from that of man himself, they are required to deny the distinctive

features of the Spirit's function in revelation and redemption; for He so brings Christ to the soul and the soul to Christ that there is one life of the Saviour and the saved in the Spirit. Did not Jesus Himself assert that the Spirit's presence and operation can be known only in its effects? "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth. So is everyone that is born of the Spirit."

Yet we can tell the man who is born of the flesh, and the man who is born of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is as manifest as the work of the flesh. If our thoughts are becoming truer, our feelings more tender, our wishes holier, our lives worthier, if our faith grows to assurance, our love abounds, and our hope becomes brighter, we have the Spirit. But if we are not becoming like Christ, we have not His Spirit, and so are none of His. A man may never be conscious of the Spirit's working, and yet as he looks back on his life, and can in all humility and in full gratitude discover that a work of grace has been wrought in himself, he does recognise that this has not been his achievement, but God's bestowment.

(3 Men have been prone to recognise the Spirit only in extraordinary manifestations, in sudden and strange disturbances of the soul. There have been,

and still are, abnormal phenomena of the religious life—visions, voices, trances, ecstasies—but their value is difficult to estimate. Revivals are often followed by reactions, excitements by deadness of the spirit. It is doubtful whether the finest type of Christian character has its beginnings in the self-abandonment of a mass movement. It may be some souls need such birth-throes, and so much good has resulted under such conditions, that we must not judge.

We must recognise, however, that to many, if not most, Christians, the Kingdom of God comes without outward signs, even, it may be, imperceptibly to themselves. The working of the Spirit is not felt as a disturbance, but as the fulfilment of human personality. God's action is not a substitute for, or a repression of, the activity of man. The Spirit of God supplies fuller energy, and stimulates freer exercise of the will of man. God is personal, and man is personal, and man's personality is made in the likeness of and for fellowship with God's. Man's personality is thus completed in communion with God; and thus the Spirit of God, who effects the union of man with God, fulfils human personality.

(4) There is an activity of man as well as an action of God in man's change from sinner to son. Regeneration by God has its counterpart in the

conversion of man. It is a misfortune that in Jesus' saying, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven," the Greek verb which is active is translated in English as passive. The Revised Version has "turn" for "be converted," but one could wish that the revisers had had the courage to do violence so far to English idiom as to render "convert." For this might have done a little to remove the misunderstanding that conversion is something which happens to a man, and not something done by him. The meaning is "turn right round" your backs on sin in repentance and your faces to God in faith. Conversion is not something that befalls a man apart from his repentance and faith, but the change man brings about within himself in repenting and believing. To take the disciples to whom the words were addressed as an instance, they must abandon their ambition to be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, and the rivalry and enmity which resulted from the ambition, for the humility, of which the child in their midst was an example, and of which their treatment of the little ones of the Kingdom would be the test.

Conversion is not separable from regeneration. It is the human response to, and result of, regeneration; for man works out his own salvation only as God works in him. The mind must apprehend the

truth as it is in Jesus, the heart must appreciate the grace of His Cross, the will must appropriate the salvation Christ offers. Man must choose freely to become all that the Spirit of God is causing him to be. God does nothing in us without us. Omnipotence cannot without man's choice make him good, for such a result would have no moral significance or value. Man is not a puppet, but a person; and so man must will in conversion what God works in regeneration.

(5) As has already been shown, both repentance and faith exercise the whole personality of man; and so in regeneration God energises, and in conversion man exercises mind, heart, and will. If in current conceptions of faith the intellectual, and if in repentance the emotional, aspect has been over-emphasised, the idea of conversion serves to rid us of this one-sidedness, for the word itself throws into the fore-front will, choice, action. But it would be a mistake to confine the word to the volitional aspect; it is better to use it for the entire change in himself man effects, when regenerated by the Spirit.

(6) What has been stated so far applies to the adult Christian experience, where there is the consciousness of conversion, men who have lived in sin without God in the world have been brought out of the death of sin into the life in God. The

change may have appeared to them sudden, or it may have been gradual, but still they know that there is a contrast between what they once were and what they now are. It need not be a shameful, miserable, abandoned life on which they look back; enough if it was a life for self and not God. They know that they needed and found salvation from the one or the other.

But we may ask, is this experience universal? Have all Christians the consciousness of conversion in the sense of a distinct remembrance of a definite moral and spiritual change in themselves? Unless we allow theory to override fact, we must give a negative answer. There are many Christians who know themselves Christ's from the very beginnings of their experience. They were born of Christian parents, and brought up in a Christian home; through heredity and environment, the potent factors of personal development, Christ in His Spirit reached, touched and moved their personality from its beginnings. As their mind grew, it was in the knowledge of Him; as their hearts unfolded, His love filled them; as they became conscious of choice, their desire was to serve Him. They know that they had many faults and failures, but they are sure also that they found forgiveness, even as they sought it at their mother's knee. As they grew from childhood to youth, and youth to adult years,

they were not conscious of any change in themselves, save that they continued Christ's with clearer knowledge, deeper love, and firmer choice. At most they can remember that as they were entering on manhood or womanhood with its wider opportunities and greater obligations, they for a time gave to their relation to Christ more serious thought than they had given before, and quietly, but strongly, resolved to be His, as they had been hitherto, only more fully.

In such an experience there is no consciousness of conversion. Can we even describe such a development, crowned by such a decision, conversion? Not unless we give to the current use of the word an extension. In such a life there is, and must be, constant moral choice, a turning from the sin that allures, though it has not enslaved the soul, to the Christ who attracts more and more; but this decision day by day against sin we do not usually call conversion. If we recall that Jesus set a child before His disciples as an example of humility, and that he welcomed and blessed the babes, because of such is the Kingdom of Heaven, we shall not dare to challenge the reality of the Christian experience that thus runs back to the earliest years.

But to some this will appear a denial of the necessity of the new birth, and so a challenge of

Christ's own authority. But it has been expressly affirmed in the description just given of this type of Christian experience that it is no other than Christ who in His Spirit has wrought this work of grace through the influences of the Christian heritage and education. Who can say how soon in the development of the child the Spirit of God may dwell and work? Is there any child too young to be kept by the grace of God from sin unto holiness? It will be a childlike piety and morality that the Spirit will bring forth as His fruit in the child; but has that not a beautiful simplicity and a tender grace all its own? And on it rests Christ's approval.

CHAPTER IV.

COMMUNION WITH CHRIST.

IV.—COMMUNION WITH CHRIST.

(1) The Christian life, which begins with regeneration and conversion, and is shown in repentance of sin and faith in God's forgiveness, is throughout its course communion with Christ. It is not a plan of salvation or a theory of the Atonement which moves to penitence and calls forth faith, but the object of Christian faith is personal, the living Saviour and Lord. The Grace of God is no abstract attribute of God merely conceived by man, but it is God himself who is received in the soul of man in the only-begotten and well-beloved Son of God, who as brother man can and does enter into intimate and gracious fellowship with men. The Holy Spirit, who brings about the inward change, makes Christ a present reality to the spirit of man. The mind's enlightening is the communication of the truth as it is in Jesus, the heart's quickening is the possession of the love of Christ, the strengthening of the will is the exercised power of the Lord.

(2) Christ is not merely a historical reality of the

long-gone past. The story in the Gospels does not complete His history. He has not, as other men have, passed into the darkness and the silence of death. He still lives, and lives without the local limitation and other restrictive conditions of His sensible presence on earth, but is everywhere present for faith with a wisdom, a power and a grace which are sufficient for all the needs of men. The Christian Church has as its unshaken foundation the experience of the continued presence and supreme power of Christ. Whether the words fell from the lips of Jesus during this earthly life or not, the declarations in the great commission to the Church in Matthew xxviii. 18-20 express the spiritual reality, in which the Christian generations have lived, moved, and had their being. "Lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the consummation of the age." "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth." This is a promise that for the Christian believer is become a certainty. The immediacy of the Saviour's presence and the sufficiency of His power are being experienced as real daily; and in the hours of close and tender communion it may appear as though this certainty needed no further evidence. But it must be recognised that there are many to-day who challenge the reality of the experience, and boldly declare that this fellowship with the living Christ

is an illusion, however beneficent an illusion it may have proved itself to be.

While for the individual believer the inward witness may seem sufficient, and he may meet his own doubts and questions with the confident assertion, "I have felt." Yet to those who do not share the experience he must try to give reasons that will persuade, and he himself, in the variations of moods to which the religious life is exposed, will come to realise that he wants not only the confidence of emotion, but also the certainty of intelligible and communicable conviction. That a logical demonstration can be offered which will compel intellectual assent without personal experience cannot be pretended; but reasons may be offered which will justify the venture of faith, in which the personal experience must begin. (i.) If the revelation of God as Father and the redemption of man from sin is bound up with the person and work of Christ, that is, if the earthly life of Jesus has the meaning and worth for the soul of man assigned to it, it is incredible that the revealing and redeeming personal activity of Christ should be limited in time and space, so that other lands and other ages should experience only a posthumous influence, which must necessarily be of lesser efficacy. What is alone consistent with the unique position and function of Jesus in human history is

His continued and universal presence, so that His personal activity in its full efficacy should not be the monopoly of one nation and one period, but the possession of mankind for all time. (ii.) If it be objected that the historical personality must necessarily have passed into the unseen world, as all men do pass, must have passed "that bourne from which no travellers return," we can answer that the founders of the Christian Church believed that the Master they had known in this earthly life had returned to them, and made Himself for the certainty of their faith visibly manifest to them. The evidence for the appearance after the resurrection is so abundant and varied that criticism has failed to get rid of it. If the witnesses were deceived, the greatest moral and religious movement in human history rests on a delusion—an incredible supposition. (iii.) Again, if it be argued that it is God Himself who dwells and works in man for his salvation apart from this historical personality, we can answer that if God did use the mediation of this historical personality to reveal Himself and redeem man in the earthly life of Jesus, it is reasonable that the same mediation should be continued, and that Jesus should not become merely a spectator in the later acts of the divine drama, in the first scene of which he was the chief actor. This conjecture surely becomes a certainty when

we consider that what is distinctive of the Christian experience is just the fact that God dwells and works here and now, not apart from but in Christ present and active. The Christian cannot think God without Christ. It is God in Christ he knows, trusts, loves, and serves. (iv.) Whenever and wherever in the history of the Church the creed, or code, or ritual, or polity has displaced the living Saviour and Lord, there has been declension and impotence; but there is revival and reform in the recovery of the Christ of Faith. Always and everywhere the Church's vitality and vigour depend on His continual presence and supreme power. If Christ be not accepted as revealing God and redeeming man, then, of course, there is no reason why He should be supposed to be an exception to the race to which He belongs. But if He be at all acknowledged as having in His earthly life brought God to men and men to God, it is inconsistent having gone so far not to go further. Communion with Christ is not the peculiarity of a few saints, it is the form the Christian life fully realised must assume.

(3) This communion of the Christian with Christ does not and cannot detach itself from the historical reality. The presence and power of Christ we here and now experience gains its content from the person and work of the historical

Jesus. Although Paul was not a companion of Jesus in His earthly life, although he seldom refers in his letters to the words or works of Jesus in the flesh, yet when he seeks to present convincingly the reality of the life in Christ in its effects on the soul of man, he represents it as crucifixion and resurrection with Christ. While there is a reference to the past in the former and to the future in the latter, there is a present reference in both. The Christian is crucified with Christ in the sense that he by faith claims as his own what Christ suffered on his behalf. The Christian rises with Christ in the sense that the victory of Christ over death is the pledge and the pattern of his deliverance from death. But in Romans vi. Paul uses this conception to exhibit the necessary character of the Christian life as death unto sin and life unto God. Communion with Christ is not sentimental adoration of Christ in His beauty and glory, nor even merely affectionate intercourse with Him, love answering to love; it is a reproduction in the Christian of Christ's own experience in His sacrifice for sin, and His consecration unto God.

As the live coal from off the altar touched with stinging flame the lips of the prophet which it cleansed, so God's forgiveness in Christ's Cross deepens the sense of sinfulness, quickens the sorrow of penitence, makes the saved sinner a partner

with his Saviour in grief for the world's evil. We are surely not Christ's intimates until we have thus had the fellowship of His suffering, being conformed unto His death. The risen Saviour and Lord now liveth unto God. To use the imagery of the Epistle to the Hebrews, He the High Priest is in the heavenly sanctuary ever presenting unto God in His intercession for men the sacrifice of Himself He offered once for all. Without figure of speech the living Saviour and Lord is wholly consecrated unto God in making effective for Salvation His own sacrifice, in giving Himself to dwell and work in all who receive Him in faith. This consecration of Christ to God shows its efficacy in men by their like consecration. As men live no longer unto themselves, but unto Him that died for them and lives in them, He presents them, because they present themselves in Him, as a living sacrifice unto God.

(4) What has now been described is the typical Christian experience, but it must be frankly conceded that there are varying degrees of the consciousness of communion. Not to all Christians is the Christ of faith so definite and certain a spiritual reality as He was to Paul, as He has been to many Christian saints since apostolic days. That Christ indeed lived came to Dr. Dale as a glad discovery as he was writing a sermon on the Resurrection,

and henceforth Christian life was to him the fellowship of the living Christ. For him this experience was so real that he argued the sufficiency of this foundation of faith apart from the historical evidence of the Gospels. While this conclusion may be questioned, as it is doubtful whether this experience would endure if the historical reality of Jesus were disproved, yet it is significant and valuable to find the experience of the apostle repeated in the case of an English theologian, marked by his wide knowledge, common sense, and sound judgment, not the sort of man at all to be subject to illusions.

This certainty of communion with Christ is not reserved for a few saints, it is intended for all Christians. It is not a luxury, but a necessity of the Christian life, if it is to attain its full stature. Some men seem content with believing the teaching and following the example of Jesus; some go a step further and hold that in some way it is through Christ's death that forgiveness has come to them, and that somehow through His Spirit which is, however, conceived as an impersonal influence, Christ in heaven is affecting their lives; but they do not know Christ as a present, personal, gracious, and mighty reality. One may ask whether the teaching and example will not become most effective in personal influence, whether a death of the

distant past can have such present value unless He who died still lives in personal contact with those for whom He died, whether the Spirit's indwelling and inworking conceived as impersonal does not, in efficacy, fall far short of personal communion.

(5) If this experience is so desirable, how is it to be maintained? We must recognise that there are different modes of sustaining the communion with Christ. Some are helped to realise the presence of the Saviour and Lord by the vivid remembrance of the experience of His grace that they had at their conversion, and others by the constant tokens in their experience of His guidance and guardianship still. Some as they study the Gospels in reverent and sympathetic appreciation discover that the Person who meets them there is with them now, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Others are so impressed by the experience of Paul that they catch the contagion of his certainty that Christ lived in Him. The lives of the saints are to many the proof of the living Saviour and Lord; these holy lives introduce them to the Holiest. Comfort in sorrow, guidance in perplexity, deliverance from peril, hope in bereavement, victory over temptation, all these are pledges of the presence of God in Christ.

(6) What is, we may ask, the relation of communion with Christ to sanctification by the Spirit?

It is the one God who in Christ and in the Spirit dwells and works in men to make them holy. We cannot in reality separate, although we may in conception distinguish communion with Christ and sanctification by the Spirit. When we realise the historical reality of the divine revelation and human redemption in Christ, our experience is communion with Christ. When we recognise that historical reality in immediate operation in our inmost life, so inward that we cannot separate it from our own aspiration and effort, we are experiencing sanctification by the Spirit.

CHAPTER V.

SANCTIFICATION BY THE SPIRIT.

V.—SANCTIFICATION BY THE SPIRIT.

(1) The Christian revelation of God is expressed in the threefold name, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and in the Christian redemption it is the Father who in love sends the Son to save, and welcomes, as a child, the sinner saved. It is the Son who suffers for man's sin, and saves man from sin. It is the Spirit who so brings into the inmost life of man the saving grace of Christ that he is thoroughly renewed, not only forgiven, but made holy. The love of God the Father is revealed in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and realised in the individual life in the fellowship of the Holy Ghost. As is well known, the great doctrinal difference of the Latin and the Greek Church is that the former teaches that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, and the latter that the Spirit proceeds from the Father only, if through the Son. This subtlety which has so divided Christendom need not detain us. Enough for our

practical purpose is it to note that the New Testament always brings the life and work of the Spirit in man into closest relation to the revelation and redemption in Christ, so that the Spirit of God is also spoken of as the spirit of Christ. The Spirit takes the things of Christ and imparts them unto man. He makes the universal truth and grace of Christ man's individual possession. As had already been insisted, so inseparable are the presence of Christ and the operation of the Spirit in the believer, that it is only in our conception that we can distinguish their functions; but we follow New Testament usage if we ascribe the moral and religious change wrought in man, or, to use the recognised theological term, sanctification, to the working of the Spirit. The closeness of the relation may be illustrated by the historical connection between Pentecost and the Resurrection. It was only when the certainty that the Lord was risen, and now reigned, mighty to save, had taken full possession of the primitive community, that "the holy enthusiasm," the consciousness of being filled with power from on high, took possession of the disciples. Without faith in the Crucified and Risen Saviour there would not have been, there could not have been, the abounding spiritual life of the Apostolic Church. It was to those who confessed their faith in Christ in baptism to whom the same

inspiration was afterwards given. Severed from its divine head, the Church cannot have this divine life.

(2) In the Acts of the Apostles this aspect of the work of the Spirit is made prominent. To be filled with the Spirit is to be full of the holy enthusiasm which was the distinctive feature of Pentecost. The consciousness of being possessed by the Spirit of God was accompanied by the possession of various spiritual gifts, the *charisms*, some of which we should call normal talents and functions, while others, such as the speaking with tongues, now appear to us as abnormal. Similar unusual phenomena have accompanied religious revivals at different times. The intense stimulation of the emotions at such a time appears to call into play psychic powers that are usually unexercised. As in subsequent times, so even in the Apostolic Age there was danger to the unity, sobriety, and beneficence of the Christian Church in these abnormal functions. Those who possessed them were proud of their distinction, and insisted on exercising them, regardless of the general interests of the Christian community. The First Epistle to the Corinthians deals fully with this peril. While laying down rules for the exercise of these gifts, Paul insists that there is a more excellent way of serving God and man, and that way is love.

Without denying the reality of the Spirit's operation in these gifts, Paul gives them a subordinate place, and emphasises as the work of the Spirit, which is of primary importance, the inner renewal of the soul of man. It is not in the gifts which attract general attention, but in the graces and virtues of the Christian character that Paul discerns most clearly the working of the Spirit. If we are guided by Paul, even in a religious revival, we shall lay less stress on the extraordinary activities which may accompany it, and look more eagerly for the evidence of changed lives.

(3) We can justify this preference if we consider what is the end of the Christian life. It is not the sense of security or satisfaction that the assurance of forgiveness brings which is to be regarded as God's primary purpose in saving man from sin at such a cost as the death of His Son. The Old Law required the people of God to be holy as He is; and Jesus, having revealed God's Fatherhood unto men, bids those who would prove that they are indeed the children of God be perfect, even as their Heavenly Father is perfect. So Paul is ever insisting that those whom Christ has saved should, with Him, die unto sin, and live unto God. There can be loving fellowship with God only in the measure that there is living likeness to God. Men can live in God only as they love

what He loves, hate what He hates, and will as He wills.

Against all tendencies to lower the Christian good to the wishes, hopes, or fears of men in laying emphasis on the punishment escaped or the happiness secured in the Christian salvation, we must insist that Christ died and lives to save men from sin, and to make them good. Holiness in likeness to God, this and nothing else or less is the goal of the Christian course begun at conversion. At a certain moral and religious stage it may be sometimes necessary and legitimate to arouse the indifferent to anxiety regarding their relation to God and goodness by setting plainly before them the consequences of continuing in the evil way; but the Christian life should leave this motive behind at the first stage of its development. What Christians generally need is a more constant and urgent insistence on the claim of holiness as the end of Christian life, and a holiness which will, in the children of God, show the likeness of the Father.

(4) If we fix our gaze on this goal of the Christian course, it must at first sight appear to us unattainable. "Who is sufficient for these things?" we might almost despairingly ask, if we could not with the Christian apostle confidently reply, "Our sufficiency is of God." Our becoming holy is not

the result of our own independent effort, but it is God's work of grace in us. Whenever we accept Christ as Saviour and Lord in faith, the grace of God, in the Spirit of God, takes possession of us and becomes active in us. As we yield ourselves to the Spirit's presence and influence our thoughts do become truer, our feelings more tender, our wishes purer, our lives holier. There is human effort, but it is not the hopeless striving of man unaided by God to make himself good. It is the constant resolve of submission to the Spirit's working. It is the energy of faith apprehending, appreciating, and appropriating the truth and grace of God in Christ Jesus. It is receptivity for, and responsiveness to, God giving Himself more fully in His Spirit.

While the changeless God increases not His grace, which is infinite and eternal as He Himself is, yet man's receptivity here, as in every other sphere, is limited and conditioned by the constant law of development. There is, and must be, growth in grace. Where the Christian life has begun in a moral and spiritual crisis, and where there had been previously a large and deep development of the inner life, the progress may be very rapid. The moral and spiritual maturity may be reached in what appears almost an incredibly short time. We must take into account intensity as well as

duration of effort. On the other hand, there are genuinely Christian lives in which the growth is very slow, so slow that the subject of it is scarcely conscious of it, and only after a lapse of years can himself mark any progress. While any indifference which retards growth is to be condemned, so is any impatience which tries to force it. Difference of talent, temperament, character, environment, must be recognised as necessarily affecting the rate of progress; and we must not judge others, nor even be unduly despondent about ourselves. Yet probably the warning that most Christians to-day need is that they do not clearly see the need of growth, and they do not steadily and earnestly fulfil the conditions of aspiration, purpose, faith and prayer which secure progress.

(5) The man who seeks to grow in grace will soon discover that there is in himself, even when regenerated by the Spirit of God, an inner contrast and conflict. The old man is not dead, though dying, even when the new man is born. The birth-pang of the one is not completely the death-throe of the other. The believer is possessed by the Spirit, and seeks to submit himself to the Spirit, and yet there survive in him appetites, ambitions, tempers, habits, affections which are all contrary to the mind and will of God, and so hinder and withstand his progress in holiness. For this antagonist within

the soul of man of the Spirit of God, Paul uses the comprehensive term "flesh," by which he means neither the body nor even the sensual desires, but all the sins that beset even the Christian man. How vividly he depicts the struggle of flesh and Spirit. Jesus, too, contrasts him who is born of the flesh and him who is born of the Spirit, yet even in him who is born of the Spirit there remains some of the flesh.

In regard to the struggle, two extremes must be avoided. Some so magnify the power of the Spirit in man as to ignore the resistance which can be offered to His influence; and so they make light of the struggle; they even sometimes persuade themselves that in them it has finally issued in the victory of the Spirit. All such self-confidence is perilous; this is the spiritual pride that may come before moral destruction. The Spirit is not a physical omnipotence producing inevitable results. The crucifixion of the old man is not, and cannot be, effected in a moment, and the less seriously the struggle is regarded, the less likely is the victory which will end it.

On the other hand, however, even Christian men are found who seem to regard the struggle, even in the might of the Spirit of God, as a forlorn hope. The flesh seems to them so persistent and so potent that they expect their whole life to be one weary

resultless campaign, from which death alone will bring a discharge. All such self-depreciation is perilous. We are likely to relax what we regard as resultless effort, and to acquiesce in an arrested moral and spiritual development, for which there is in our condition no necessity. The disposition in this struggle must be blended hope and fear; hope that the Spirit of God in us will prevail over every hindrance, and fear lest we forfeit that hope by any indifference or neglect on our own part.

(6) While the struggle is being waged within the soul, if there is more and more the victory of the Spirit over the flesh, there will be the evidence thereof in the outer life in the fruit of the Spirit. While we must defer to the next chapter the consideration of the Christian character, with its virtues and graces, there is one aspect of it, suggested by Paul's phrase, which we may now consider. As the fruit of the spirit, Christian character is not an artificial production, but it is a vital growth; it is the manifestation of the life within. It is not conformity to an external law, it is not imitation of an external example, it is the spontaneous expression of the inward motive, disposition, principle. It is in communion with Christ that the sanctification by the Spirit is effected. It is as we behold the glory of His moral perfection that we ourselves are changed into the same image from glory to

glory as by the Lord the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is no other than the fruit which Jesus told the disciples they should bear in abundance if they would abide in Him. The late Henry Drummond insisted that likeness comes by looking. As we see Jesus as He is, we become like Him, in whom the Spirit dwelt without measure, and brought forth the fruit of perfection.

CHAPTER VI.

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

VI.—CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

(1) The "fruit of the Spirit" is the Christian character. God's forgiveness has its end in man's holiness. Morality is as old as mankind, and religion has ever had some influence on the moral standards and actions of men. There had been a preparation for Christianity, not only in the Jewish nation, which was the cradle of the Christian Church, but also in the Gentile world, by which its childhood was surrounded. Jesus declared that He had come not to destroy, but to fulfil, and this declaration applies not only to the law and the prophets of Israel, but also to the morals of Greece and Rome.

Thus, although the Christian character has its source in the indwelling and inworking Spirit of God, received on condition of faith in the revelation of God and redemption of man by Jesus Christ, yet in its outward manifestation, in the virtues which it displays and the graces which adorn it, there is the blending of the old and the new. While it transcends, yet it approves all previous moral

excellences. Jesus in His teaching, and the Apostolic Church in its standards, accepted, and, in accepting, enriched and enlarged what was best in Jewish morality. And later the Christian Church, when it began to form a system of morals, conjoined to the Christian graces the four virtues which had been acknowledged by teachers of the ancient world. While these virtues do not exhaust the content of Christian morality, yet they will serve for our present purpose to suggest at least the essential features. We must put in the forefront, however, the new rather than the old in Christian character.

(2) It is clearly impossible within the necessary limits of this chapter to give a full accouut of the moral teaching of Jesus. Our attention must be confined to its distinctive characteristics: (i.) Over against the legalism and formalism of the Pharisaic morality and religion, with its stress on obedience to outward commands and observance of external ordinances, Jesus asserted the inwardness of morality. In the contrasts He presents in the Sermon on the Mount between the old law and the new life, the Pharisaic and the filial piety, He illustrates one principle—that morality is not confined to outward act, but embraces the motive, purpose, disposition; it is more concerned about the inner than the outer man, as when the tree is

good, its fruit also will be good. It is this inwardness of morality that is affirmed when Christian character is represented as the fruit of the Spirit, the result of sanctification.

(ii.) Over against Jewish and Gentile exclusiveness, which limited moral obligations by race, nationality, class, or culture, Jesus affirmed the universality of the moral claim. Love is to be shown to enemies as well as neighbours. The despised tax-gatherer and the sinful woman are of value to God, and so claim the solicitude of Jesus. The Samaritan can give an example to the Jew. A Gentile's faith rejoices the heart, and wins the praise of Jesus. A morality which does not embrace all mankind in its range is not Christian. Any argument based on national prejudice, any appeal to racial hatred, any assertion of social division against this universalism is contrary to the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and rests under His judgment.

(iii.) Many centuries have passed since Jesus taught, and humanity has made abundant and varied progress in its thought and life, and yet it cannot be affirmed that the human conscience has outgrown the moral principle of Jesus of entire love to God and equal love to self and neighbour, or that any human life since has illustrated that principle in word or deed more graciously and mightily than

Jesus Himself. If we mistakenly attempt to perpetuate as valid every concrete illustration of the principle Jesus gave in His teaching, we entangle it in the customs and conditions of one age or people; but if we penetrate to the principle, and apply it to our varying moral situations, by a conscience enlightened by the Spirit, we can confidently maintain the absoluteness of the Christian ideal. It is not "cribb'd, cabin'd, and confin'd" by time or place, but affords moral guidance to all times and all lands.

(iv.) As love is the supreme principle of Christian morality, love measured on the one hand by the forgiveness of the injuries and wrongs done by enemies, and on the other by the sacrifice of all selfish wishes and ends, there is no limit set to the good which the Christian is to be ever doing to his fellow men. The beneficence of all Jesus' commands is what gives to Him the Highest place among all the teachers of mankind; and that beneficence finds its perfect expression in His own sacrifice for man's salvation.

(3) The moral teaching of Jesus was known in and ruled the life of the early Christian Church. Our Gospels, with the evidence they afford of the care exercised in preserving the Master's teaching, show how fully the moral authority of Jesus was recognised. Hence the moral standards of the

Apostolic Church embodied the teaching of Jesus. It would be an unwarranted exaggeration to say that the moral life of all these Christian communities did realise the ideal of Jesus. The defects of Jewish or Gentile morality were not at once altogether transcended. The exclusiveness of the Jew was not easily broken down, and the potent personality of Paul, even vehemently exercised, was necessary to secure practical recognition of the Christian universalism. In some churches, excitement, due to the mistaken hopes of a speedy return of Christ, disturbed the moral conditions. In others an overestimate of the more showy charisms in comparison with the quieter excellences of Christian character endangered the moral health. But everywhere the complementary obligations of purity (especially in sexual relations) and charity (extending even to persecutors) were insisted on, and with all the qualifications that facts demand, the Christian communities may be regarded as the moral salt and leaven of that dying world.

(4) The Christian Church could not preserve the Greek culture or the Roman civilisation in its completeness against the barbarian invaders; but it did take up into the moral ideal it transmitted to the new era in human history the four ancient virtues, of which Plato's "Republic" is the classic exposition. While included in Christian morals,

these virtues are transformed by the Christian spirit.

(i.) The wisdom of the Greek philosopher, due to the range of his knowledge and the power of his thought, becomes the moral insight and spiritual discernment of the Christian seer and saint who, pure in heart, sees God, and in God's light sees his duty clearly, who, because he lives in communion with Christ, has the mind of Christ to judge all things, who, yielding to the Spirit, is by that Spirit guided into all truth. To-day, as ever, the Christian man needs this transformed wisdom, for there are many problems of individual duty and social obligation to be solved, and their solution can be reached only by the application of the Christian ideal to the needs and claims of to-day. A conventional morality, content with the already morally attained may not feel this need, but a progressive morality will desire this guidance to ever higher moral achievement.

(ii.) The temperance of the Greek gentleman required moderation in the satisfaction of bodily needs in order that the harmony of life might not be disturbed, but allowed a large measure of laxity in sexual relations; but this becomes in Christianity a purity of the imagination, the emotions, and the desires, which demands the soul's complete mastery over the body, so that even

bodily functions shall subserve the soul's sanctification, which excludes the unchaste look or word as well as deed, which forbids any indulgence, such as the use of strong drink, that may even in the slightest degree imperil the supremacy of the Spirit of God in man. In an age of growing material resources, with the comfort and luxury these bring, there is a danger of the physical mastering the spiritual in man; and so this transformed temperance is an urgent need of the day.

(iii.) The courage of the Greek soldier in enduring pain and risking death for his native city in defending it against its foes, is transformed in the calmness and gladness of the Christian martyr, who is ready at any cost to be faithful to Christ and His cause in the world. If to-day such martyrdom in laying down the life is not generally required, yet Christian life is still a battlefield that calls for bravery, whether it be in facing danger in bodily pain or worldly loss, while struggling against the manifold evil in the world, or in enduring the many trials and sorrows that do come and must come to those whose hearts are tender and pitiful. A fatal mistake is made to-day in supposing that it is only in the war which destroys life that manhood or womanhood can be made strong. The war to save life from sin, shame, sorrow has still more room for heroism.

(iv.) The justice of the Greek citizen, who recognised his place in the society to which he belonged, and accepted its duties, is transformed into the Christian love, which doeth no ill to a neighbour, but to the uttermost seeks his good; which uses its strength to bear the burdens of the weak; which is ready even to lay down life itself to save another. The limited requirements of justice, as embodied in the State, must in the Christian be expanded to the infinite obligations of love as slowly yet surely realised in a Christian community, reflecting in its unity the oneness of God. But the realisation of love in the Christian community must be accompanied by the transformation of all human society until all mankind be embraced in that unity. This is what the Christian Spirit makes of the four ancient virtues.

(5) Love belongs to the Christian virtues as to the Christian graces; it is the link that binds Christian morality to Christian religion. The love which man receives from God awakens in man a responsive love, which not only returns to God in gratitude, but diffuses itself among men in generosity. But of love as shown to men no more need here be said; but we must now turn to the distinctive Christian graces of Faith, Hope, and Love as expressive of man's relation to God. Just as sin is distrust of as well as disobedience to God,

so Christian holiness embraces not only moral virtues, but religious graces. Of faith we have already to speak at the beginning of this description of Christian life, for it is the fundamental grace. It is man's receptivity for and responsiveness to God's grace, not at the beginning only, but throughout the whole course of Christian life. It ever abides, as man must ever be dependent on God, accepting as he grows ever more fully the fulness in God. Of hope we shall have afterwards to speak; what needs to be now said is this, that whatever present grace faith claims there is grace abounding still to be claimed by man, and so the experience of faith begets the anticipation of hope, and the greater the certainty of faith's present good the greater the confidence of hope's future gain. Both these graces are directed toward God for the good He does or will bestow; but love toward God as toward man is greater, because it gives and not merely gets. It has been maintained by some Christian thinkers that we should not speak of love to God, but only of faith in God. While sentimentalism or emotionalism is a weakness to the soul, there is a gratitude to, an adoration of, a satisfaction in God, which may be fitly called love, and which is the soul's loftiest flight toward God.

(6) In thus describing separately the four virtues and the three graces we do run a risk, and that is,

to lose sight of the essential unity of Christian character. It is not like a building in which stone is added to stone; it is like a living, growing body —one in all increase and development. The love of God through the grace of Christ in the fellowship of the Spirit received and responded to in faith, hope, love issues in man's love of himself and his neighbour; and of this love wisdom is the discernment of its duties, justice is the distribution of its gifts, courage is the resistance of the selfish pains that would quench it, and temperance the control of the selfish desires that would enthral it. All virtues and all graces are love's expression and exercise.

CHAPTER VII.

CHRISTIAN SERVICE.

VII.—CHRISTIAN SERVICE.

(1) The Christian character, described in the previous article, finds outward expression in Christian conduct, in word and deed. And just as the Christian character has its unifying principle in love, so Christian conduct has one common feature—service. Greatness from the standpoint of the world is shown by the amount of service which either wealth or rank can command; from the Christian standpoint greatness lies in the fullest and freest service of others. Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and as the Master was in the midst of His disciples as one that serveth, so the follower of Jesus must ever be labouring for the good of others, for the rescue of the perishing, for the relief of the needy, for the comfort of the sorrowing, for the guidance of the erring, for the overthrow of all strongholds of evil, for the upbuilding of the City of God among men. And even as the service of Jesus did not stop short of sacrifice, so the law of Christian service is the losing of life to sin, self, and

world, in order to find it in God's glory and man's good.

(2) When we consider how great and varied is the work of the Kingdom of God, may we not feel overwhelmed by the vastness of the task set us? But we should remember that we are not expected to do everything that needs to be done, only all that we ourselves can do. Each man has his own sphere dependent on his position and relations. It is the will of God that determines for each man his heredity, his individuality, his environment. By these the capacity and opportunity of each man are limited. Within the sphere so defined for him every man should recognise his own vocation. As he is faithful in the discharge of that vocation, he will find that his capacity develops, and his opportunity expands; and, nevertheless, whatever his advance may be, he will yet discover that he cannot do, and therefore is not called to do, all the good that needs to be done. Distraction of interest and effort are not a help, but a hindrance to the best fulfilment of the calling wherewith any man has been called of God, while concentration is the condition of efficiency. Better it is to do a few things excellently than to do a great many things indifferently.

It is this idea of vocation which has in recent ethical thought been used most fruitfully in defining Christian duties. Each man has some

position in human society, to the demands of which he must give most of his attention and activity. Through this position he is brought into relations to others. His position determines his capacity for service, and his relations set the bounds to his opportunity.

While this must be the fixed centre of Christian service, it must, on the other hand, be insisted that from this centre there should be drawn an ever-widening circumference. Interests can and ought to be widened, and efforts may and should be enlarged. There is a universal manhood to be realised in, and not to be restricted by, the vocation. It is for the Kingdom of God as a whole that a man accepts his position and recognises his relations. Even in Christian service a narrow specialism must be avoided. The worker in the slums of the great city in Britain must not be so absorbed in the social problem as it there confronts him as to allow himself to become indifferent to the call of the wide world for the Gospel. In each particular task the universal aim should be recognised.

(3) Amid all the changes of human society there is one social institution which in its essential features remains the same. The fixed centre of human society is the home—the father, the mother, and the child. These are the root of all

associations among men. In describing the sphere of Christian service as dependent on position and relations, we must begin by insisting on the permanent claim of the home. Whatever work in the world a man is called to do, he begins, and for the full growth of his manhood he will go on in a home. As son, brother, husband, father, sacred obligations and responsibilities will be laid upon him. It is noteworthy that Jesus, who did not concern Himself at all with the organisation of Church or State or industry, did defend the home against two perils that threatened it from the interpretation of the law by the Scribes. He insisted on the permanence of the marriage bond, and on the obligation of children to make due provision for the needs of their parents. And throughout the New Testament do we find the same insistence on the duties of husbands and wives, parents and children to one another. It would, of course, be an exaggeration to say that Christianity first discovered the home, as not only did Judaism lay great stress on the family life, but in paganism also we have worthy examples of love of husband and wife, parent and child. But it may be said confidently that the Christian home, in which the family is found at its best, is the product of the Christian faith.

From the Christian point of view, however, even

the home is subordinate to the kingdom. Just as Jesus Himself left His home in Nazareth, and denied the right of His mother and brethren to control His public ministry, so does He call on His disciples, if need be, to forsake home and kindred to follow Him. There is a family selfishness even in Christian homes, which delays the coming of the Kingdom. Husband and wife, parents and children may be so concerned about one another's welfare, and so content with the comforts and joys of their small society, as to be forgetful of the wider world, with its claims for sympathy and calls for service. And yet the ideal of the home even can be realised fully only, as it is not self-enclosed, but as the love which it so graciously nurtures goes out beyond it to a wider ministry of love among men.

(4) But the home has an economic basis. There must be a house to dwell in, mouths have to be filled with food, and backs to be clothed. The bread-winner is regarded as the head of the household. We need not now take into account the homes in which there is so much inherited wealth that the support of the household does not depend on any present exertions of the members. In most families, as soon as the school-days are over, there must be the choice of an earthly calling—trade, business, or profession—which will in due time

make the son or the daughter independent economically of the parents. Whatever view we may take of the change, the industrial conditions to-day are such that girls as well as boys must seek work outside the home. The primary object of the earthly calling seems to be to earn a living; but it can be so discharged as to take its place as a part of Christian service.

One of Luther's great contributions to Christian progress was his insistence on the sacredness of the earthly calling. Even those who have wealth to support them without working for a living have an earthly calling to fulfil in the administration of their property, and the discharge of the social obligations which the possession of property must bring with it. If that does not demand all their time and strength they can make the discharge of the duties of citizenship more fully than others can their earthly calling.

The majority of men must earn their daily bread. In so doing they may think of their work only for the sake of the wages it brings them, or they may think of their work more worthily as a necessary activity in that industrial order by which the bodily needs of man are met. Industry is feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and housing the homeless, however much that simple fact may by its elaborate processes be hidden from our careless

eyes, and therefore it is a legitimate and necessary service of mankind. It is thus that each worker should regard his task in order to recognise and realise its sacredness.

It must be frankly acknowledged that there are callings that so minister to the lusts, pleasures, and luxuries of men that it is impossible to invest them with any sacredness. Avoidance of such callings is the Christian's first duty. But legitimate callings may be carried on illegitimately, and the Christian man may find himself required to do his work in such ways as his conscience condemns. At whatever cost he has no other choice than to abandon such work. Further, the economic system under which we live is one which often seems to forbid the faithful application of Christian principles. In the strain of competition, the Christian law of love seems often impossible of fulfilment. The Christian man must strive for such modification, or, if necessary, alteration of the system as will not impose this intolerable burden on the Christian conscience. It must be admitted that to maintain the sacredness of the earthly calling in modern society does seem often no better than a "forlorn hope."

(5) But if there be (and who can doubt that there is?) this contradiction between the economic system and Christian principle, society, to become truly

Christian, must accept the task of such changes in the system as will remove this opposition, and who can command the acceptance of the task so effectively as Christian men? Hence the present urgency of the duties of citizenship. It falls quite outside the scope of this book to show whether a change of the economic basis of modern society, such as Socialism advocates, is the only effective remedy, or we can hope by progressive social reform so to remove the evil consequences of the present system that such a change will become unnecessary. But whatever conclusion we come to on this question, and it is one on which Christian men may conscientiously differ, there is a crying need for Christian men to face the social problem, and to work for its solution. Not only are there the moral evils of intemperance, impurity, dishonesty to be contended against, but there are the economic evils of sweating (long hours and low wages), irregularity of employment, and unemployment, together with their physical consequences of overcrowding, poverty, disease, and untimely death to be removed.

The comparative silence of the New Testament on the duties of citizenship beyond the injunction of submission to authority is due to the fact that the Christians addressed were subjects of a despotic empire, and not the citizens of a free state. And it

would be to bind Christian life to-day with grave-clothes of past circumstances to insist that the apparent indifference to the social problem of the Apostolic Church is a permanent, essential feature of Christian morality. We may insist rather that opportunity brings obligation, and that if by the discharge of the duties of citizenship we can relieve need and restrain wrong by the common action of the society, we are as faithfully, and more effectively, practising that philanthropy which has always been recognised as a characteristic feature of Christianity.

(6) In the home, the earthly calling and citizenship we may be serving the Kingdom of God on earth, but our service will depend for its value on the measure in which we are consciously responding in all to the supreme ideal of the Kingdom of God at home and abroad. That not only the lesser benefits of the Kingdom may be enjoyed, but that its supreme good of fellowship with God may be extended to, and its supreme duty of love may be accepted by all men, this must be the Christian's constant purpose. The whole world is the sphere of that Kingdom, and thus the distinction between home and foreign mission work is merely geographical, and not moral or religious. An equal sanctity and urgency belongs to both. All national and racial differences sink into nothingness, because all men have the same need of the Gospel, and the

one Gospel has the same sufficiency for all mankind. While this is so, there is proportionately an abundance of workers at home and a scarcity abroad; and there seems to be a vaster opportunity and a greater promise for the Kingdom of God in India and in China than anywhere else. If a comparison may be ventured on, it is the foreign mission field that to-day seems to press the most urgent demand, and to offer the noblest reward, for Christian service.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHRISTIAN HOPE.

VIII.—CHRISTIAN HOPE.

(1) One of the Christian graces is hope, which is the soul's reaching forth to, and laying hold of, the things that are before. Not only does the Christian look *upward* in communion with Christ, through whom God's forgiveness of sin, the renewal of His fellowship with man is ever gained, *inward*, for the sanctification of the Spirit in His Christian character, and *outward* to the world around him for the obligations and the opportunities of Christian service. There is the Christian's *forward* look of hope. "The best is yet to be." The highest good is not yet in full possession, but is promised as a richer inheritance. The perfection of moral character, the glory and blessedness of the clearer vision of, dearer communion with, and closer resemblance to God in Christ in heaven, the triumph of the Kingdom of God on earth, all lie in the future. "Other-worldliness" is not a reproach which could with any justice be brought against Christians to-day. The danger now rather is that they should forget that here they have no abiding city, but that

they look for a city that hath foundations, whose architect and maker is God; that their citizenship is in heaven; that the earthly house of this tabernacle must be dissolved; that it doth not yet appear what, as the children of God, they shall be, and that only when Christ shall appear shall they be like Him, for they shall see Him as He is.

There is a present practical influence in the Christian hope. It is this hope which enables a man to purify himself even as Christ is pure, to endure the light affliction which is for a moment, but worketh out a more exceeding weight of glory, and to labour for the fulfilment of God's purpose in himself and in the world. This does not mean any depreciation of, or contempt for, the earthly life, any lessening of the wonder and the wealth of this present world which is now our home, but rather a seeing of our earthly life in the light of eternity, and a beholding of the present world in the glory of the infinite God. It is a bringing of heaven's meaning and worth into the earthly story, so that each moment of time is pregnant with the power of a timeless good. The tendency in some Christian circles to let the Christian hope fall into the background of the Christian life cannot but be a fashion of the hour, for, if the New Testament may be taken as presenting to us typical Christians, it belongs to the very essence of the Christian life

not to think of death as an end, but as an entrance into life more abundant.

(2) This close connection between faith and hope in Christianity is not peculiar to it. In the religions of the world we may find abounding evidence of man's interest in, despite his ignorance of, the future for himself and the race. The belief in continued existence after death is almost universal. The savage believes in ghosts as much as he believes in gods, and he brings his gifts to the one even as he makes his offerings to the other. Generally, the future life is conceived as helpless, cheerless, hopeless, to be dreaded rather than desired. Here and there there springs up a hope—however indefinite and uncertain—that there may be isles of the blessed which the soul may at last reach, but there is no comforting and encouraging certainty in the face of death.

In the Hebrew nation there did gradually emerge a twofold hope; a hope of a "golden age" in the future for the nation, and a hope that for the saint there would yet be, in the presence of God, fulness of joy. As Israel was God's chosen people, it seemed to Hebrew faith impossible that the nation's history should end in disaster under God's judgment, and imperative that there should be a restoration to prosperity and glory by His favour. The Messianic age was to crown God's dealings with His own.

The blessings of that period were not to be confined to the one generation living when it arrived, but the saints of former ages would be raised up from death in order to share in this highest good. But alongside of this national there runs an individual hope. The saint whose only good is God, who finds in fellowship with God now the blessing of life, cannot believe that death will interrupt this communion, but rises to the certainty that his life in God will survive death and become richer in blessing than it now can be. This hope in its twofold form was rooted in faith in God.

(3) This hope was confirmed by Christ. He, as no other has done, has brought to the world the light of God in regard to human destiny, individual and universal. In His teaching the Kingdom of God as the highest good, already present among men, but to be fully enjoyed hereafter has a foremost place. The establishment, extension, and development of that Kingdom He connected most closely with His own person, and the salvation from sin to God that He had brought to men. This universal good became to those who attached themselves to Him their individual gain. Those who believed entered into the Kingdom of God and became the possessors of eternal life. His miracles of restoring the dead to life were seals of His claim to bestow on men this eternal life. His own Resurrection was

the final and adequate pledge of His own victory over death, and of the conquest of death by those who have their life in Him. The Fatherhood of God towards all men, even the most sinful, which He revealed in word and deed, cast its radiance over all the shadows of the grave, and the assurance of God's grace in Him banished from the soul of man the terror of death. He, indeed, brought life and immortality to light in His Gospel.

(4) In the New Testament there is a tone of confidence regarding the future both for the individual and for the race such as no other religious literature reveals. Its teaching regarding the last things continues and completes the twofold hope found in the Old Testament. Christ who, having been raised up from the dead, is now exalted to God's right hand is present in the Church and supreme in mediatorial sovereignty in earth and heaven. But His Kingdom in all its power and glory will be established on earth only at His Second Coming, His visible manifestation of Himself again among men. At His appearing the dead will be raised to be judged by Him. Believers will enter into eternal glory and blessedness with Him, and unbelievers will be punished with eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord. Paul sees as the end of the present order the surrender of His mediatorial sovereignty by the

Son to the Father that God may be all in all. There are some passages which suggest on the one hand that the punishment of the wicked is the cessation of their existence, and there are other passages which suggest on the other hand that there will be a final restoration of all things unto God. But scholars are now generally agreed that the New Testament does not afford the data for any dogmatic affirmation of the doctrine either of conditional immortality or of universalism. The Christian conscience revolts against the hitherto generally accepted doctrine of endless torment as the necessary meaning of the eternal punishment of which the New Testament speaks, and it is not forced upon us by any indubitable testimony. Christian faith should be content to leave the fate of the wicked to the inscrutable wisdom and unfathomable grace of the Father of all. What Christian hope is alone concerned with is the certainty of a blessed and glorious immortality in Christ for every believer, and of the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth.

A characteristic feature of the Apostolic Age was the attitude of expectancy. We cannot read the New Testament without having the fact brought home to us, again and again, that the believers of that day expected to survive till the second advent of Christ; and, as Paul's First Epistle to the

Thessalonians shows, the bereaved had to be comforted with the assurance that their loved ones who had fallen asleep in Jesus would miss nothing of the joy of the Lord's return, but would be raised up to join the living in their welcome of Him. At first confident of his survival, Paul's hope for himself seems to have wavered sometimes, and he appears to have expected that it might be by death that he would be at home with his Lord. Owing to this keen expectation of a speedy coming of Christ, there is no definite doctrine in the New Testament about the intermediate state between death and the general resurrection. If it is at the final judgment after the general resurrection that each man's eternal destiny is fixed, what is his condition till then? This problem the New Testament does not entertain, and thus it gives no certain solution.

(5) It has been necessary thus to sketch the New Testament teaching, as many Christians bring to it their own inherited opinions to find them again in it; and what most needs to be brought home to us is that we cannot conceive the Christian hope just as the Apostolic Church did. This teaching about the last things is prophetic, and the study of the Old Testament prophecy and the New Testament fulfilment has taught us that prophecy, by its very nature, necessarily uses figurative language, and cannot be literally interpreted. The fulfilment

transcends the prophecy. What God gives is ever better than what man hopes, even when God's Spirit in man has inspired these hopes. Christ's fulfilment was better than the Messianic prediction. So the New Testament eschatology must be interpreted in the light of Christian experience and history. Christ did not come again outwardly in power and glory, as the Apostolic Age expected. Again and again have the same expectations been revived, only to be once more disappointed. So far as we can project the law of human progress from the past through the present into the future, it is not likely that He will so come to this generation. This fact alone necessitates a reconsideration, courageous yet reverent, of the New Testament teaching about the last things in the light of what God has taught us in history. The hope of individual immortality in Christ seems to be quite unaffected as regards its certainty and sufficiency by this changed standpoint. As the Hebrew saint was confident that death could not interrupt his living fellowship with God, so the believer in Christ, in His assurance of the Father's forgiveness, in His communion with the ever-living Lord, in His sanctification by the Spirit of God—in a word, in the eternal life in God, Father, Son, and Spirit, which is his now, has the triumphant certainty that death for him does not, and cannot, end all, but that his

is immortality. While it is reasonable to believe that the life hereafter will be a progressive development, even as life here has been, towards perfection in growing glory and blessedness, any expectation of an intermediate state need have no place in this Christian hope. At death the Christian will find himself straightway at home with God in Christ, although in that Father's home there may be many mansions in which in order, according to his fitness, he shall dwell. As regards those who have not begun to live the life eternal in Christ, but cannot be said to have made the final refusal, we may venture to believe that God will still deal with them in grace, although it may be some stern discipline will be necessary to bring them home to Him. If any souls even then make the final refusal, the Christian revelation offers us no further hope, and we must leave that mystery with God. What alone we are sure of is that in Christ there is eternal life for all if in faith His grace is received; we may confidently expect that the life hereafter will not be the shadowy existence of disembodied spirits, but of a complete humanity, the spirit having its appropriate organ of expression and activity, what Paul calls *a spiritual body*. But the belief in a general resurrection of all the dead on one day surely belongs to the temporary form of the Christian hope, which we may be content to leave behind.

(6) There has been in human history, a progress of the Kingdom of God upon earth, for which some of the parables of Jesus in Matthew xiii. should have prepared His disciples; and we may hope that that progress will continue till, in a completion of the process, and not in a catastrophic interruption of it, God's purpose of grace shall be perfectly fulfilled. As the Kingdom, so Christ, its mediatorial sovereign, is still coming, and we may reasonably expect that in the redeemed and perfected humanity there will be the revelation of the Son of Man, such a manifestation of Him—whether sensible or spiritual who can tell?—as shall satisfy the Church longing for the glory and blessing of His presence.

CHAPTER IX.

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP.

IX.—CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP.

(1) In the description of the Christian life which has hitherto been attempted, our attention has been fixed upon the individual believer, although it has been impossible to exclude references once and again to the Christian community. What has been so far implicit must now be made explicit. The Christian life is, by its essential character, life in a Christian society. It has been maintained that Jesus' conception of the Kingdom of God is necessarily social, but scholars are divided in opinion whether the term Kingdom should not be rendered *rule* rather than *realm*, so that an individual interpretation is possible as well as a social. The German theologian, Ritschl, insisted that the purpose of Jesus was to establish a community, and that this community, and not the individual believer, is the subject of the justification, which is the gift from God in Christ. It is by attaching himself to the community that the individual believer appropriates for himself this blessing. It is not necessary for us to base our contention that the Christian

life is social on any such disputed grounds. We may prove the case by wider and surer reasons.

The object of Christian Faith is mediated to the individual believer by the Christian community. In many cases the Christian life begins in childhood or youth, and is due to the gracious influence of a Christian heredity or environment. Even where there is an adult conversion, that has been prepared for by similar influences of a Christian society, and is brought about by belief in a Gospel, which is the witness to the world borne by the Christian Church. From generation to generation the Christian inheritance has been handed down, and by the common testimony and influence of Christian men is a Christian environment maintained. While there is a direct contact of each soul that truly lives the Christian life with God in Christ, yet it is not an individual, immediated revelation which is received, or redemption which is experienced; but it is an historical incarnation and atonement, which is brought within reach of every believer by an historical community. The Christian life is not a mysticism which obscures any historic mediation; it is a positivism for which the facts of history have a divine significance and value. The truth and grace of God in Christ are perpetuated and diffused in the world in the Christian Church, on

which the individual believer is thus necessarily dependent.

(2) The revelation of God in Christ is that of Holy Father. Thence the Christian conception of God is social. It is not merely because it was a small company of disciples who were being taught to pray that the Lord's Prayer begins with the address, "Our Father," but because the nature of God, so revealed, binds men together in fellowship with one another, even as with God. Love is the summing-up of the law from the Christian standpoint; love is the distinctively Christian motive, disposition, purpose. Christian life must seek social embodiment. Jesus, from the beginning of His ministry, began to form a Christian society around Him, and it can be safely said that in the Apostolic Age severance from that society would have been regarded as departure from Christ, its Founder and Head. It is true that just as the love of Christ went out beyond the disciple band to the sinners and outcasts of Jewish society, so in the Apostolic Church there was desire and effort for the salvation of the world, as well as fellowship of mutual support and succour within the Christian community. But *philadelphy*, "the love of the brethren," was a more intense affection than even *philanthropy*, "the love of man"; and it is not a gain but a loss to the modern Church that in many

cases the very reverse obtains. Christian men are much concerned about doing good to mankind, and very careless about the Christian fellowship in love. But a Church united in love will most effectively serve a world divided by selfish greed, pride, ambition. Within the Christian community there should be the fullest expression and freest exercise of the love which, so disciplined and developed, could do the greatest good in the world around. Christian fellowship inspires Christian service. The Christian expectation of the future is not individual but social. Even in the hope of individual immortality there is the anticipation of joining that multitude which no man can number, of becoming one of that great cloud of witnesses, of a citizenship in heaven. Still more in the outlook for the Kingdom of God on earth is the Christian hope social. A redeemed humanity, not as a sum of units, but as a living body of many members and varied ministries, one in its living Head, is the object to which the Christian reaches forth, and which he grasps as already reached in hope. Whether the Christian looks backward, outward, or forward, it is in a Christian society he finds himself.

(3) The two sacraments of the Church are the signs and seals of the social character of Christian life. We need not pause just now to show that Jesus Himself instituted these ordinances, and that

we are entitled to regard them as indications of His will regarding the life in Him. In baptism, Christ, in His Church welcomes to Himself and His Church the infant dedicated by his parents unto the Christian life, or the adult confessing his own faith in Christ. The fact already repeatedly referred to, that Christ reaches many lives through Christian heredity and environment from their beginnings, is the justification of infant baptism. In the Christian home the arms of Jesus are outstretched to enfold and bless the babes. For those baptized in infancy the ordinance means that they have grown up within, and not outside of, the Christian community, and that there is an allegiance which, if they do not themselves confirm, they must disown. The Christian fellowship claims, as it welcomes them, from the beginning of their life.

It would be a great gain if, in the Congregational churches, more emphasis were laid on the first communion. We do not want the ordinance of confirmation with the bishop's necessary presence, but the idea of confirmation should find some simple, yet solemn and sacred expression. The parental dedication is *confirmed* by the personal choice of the youth or maiden. "Joining the Church" is a misleading phrase in this connection. These young persons have grown up within the Church, for in baptism they have been already

welcomed to its fellowship. They now accept personally what has been accepted by others on their behalf. As soon as this acceptance can be intelligently, reverently, and conscientiously made, it should be encouraged. To the writer, it seems that in most cases this confirmation is unduly delayed, and that boys and girls should be at an earlier age welcomed at the Lord's table. The Lord's Supper is the ordinance of continuance in, as baptism is of entrance into, the Christian fellowship. It is not individual fellowship with Christ merely, but it is a common fellowship of the members with the Head of the living body of the Church. It is communion one with another in Christ. In the remembrance of His atoning death there is realisation of His uniting life in His community. The writer was for eight years pastor of a church where the ordinance was observed weekly at the close of every Sunday morning service, and from his own experience he regrets that the observance is not more frequent in the churches. Not that the ordinance has any magical virtue, but that, observed in the proper mood and for the right purpose, thereby the Christian fellowship may become more of a reality. Much has been said about improving the church meeting, and so making it the glowing heart of the Christian fellowship; but to the writer it seems that the Church's centre is the Lord's

Table, and that by confining the church meeting entirely to what concerns the religious life, the communion might become the church meeting. But the method is quite secondary. What is primary is that the spirit of fellowship be awakened in our churches. What we need to insist on is that the vitality and the vigour of the Christian life depend on the measure in which the individual believer enters into, and abides in, the Christian community in fellowship with the Head in the members.

(4) It is quite probable that this insistence on the sacraments as signs and seals of fellowship will seem strange and alien to many Christian men in our churches, but this itself is but an evidence of how narrowed and lowered the current conception of the Church is. This is a theme to which we must afterwards return. But meanwhile we may further consider the outward expression of the common life of the Church apart from its sacraments. Religious life must, and does, express itself in prayer and praise, in worship of the Father through Christ in the Spirit. This public worship must be distinguished from private devotion. In the latter the individual believer pours out his thanksgiving, or utters his needs, and also exercises the ministry of intercession for others. It goes without saying that the Christian life will swiftly

and surely languish if private devotion is neglected. It is an essential condition of the communion with Christ, and sanctification of the Spirit, of which we have already spoken. But public worship is the necessary complement of private devotion. If the Christian life be, as has been shown, social, private devotion will complete itself in public worship. This public worship, however, is not merely private devotion offered by a number of persons. Just as any society is more than the sum of the individuals that compose it by as much as they act and re-act on one another, so public worship expresses fellowship in Christ as private devotion cannot. We must not allow ourselves to be entangled now in the controversy about the modes of worship; but this must be said that even in free prayer the presiding minister must not utter merely his private devotion, but become as fully as he can the voice of the fellowship, expressing in his words the common life in Christ unto God.

(5) The Christian service in which the Christian character is exercised has already been described. What here alone needs mention is that this service as Christian will be social. In working for the Kingdom of God at home or abroad, Christians must co-operate with one another, and in such co-operation not only show, but even deepen and widen their fellowship. There is little danger to-day,

with its practical tendency, of ignoring or neglecting the need and the claim of the work of the Church in its manifold forms. The danger, however, is that the common work will be detached from, and not expressive of the common life. It may be inevitable that for particular objects, moral, social, philanthropic, members of different churches should draw together in societies unconnected with any Christian Church. Without attaching any fictitious value, or feeling any superstitious reverence for any external ecclesiastical organisation, we may, nevertheless, regret the tendency in so far as in such divergent interests the unity of the Christian community in its work for the Kingdom is lost sight of. The common work of the Church should always be the outcome of its common life, and the individual Christian will serve the world best, not in self-centred isolation, but in self-surrending co-operation.

(6) Central and fundamental to the Church's work must ever be its witness to the Gospel. It was the Gospel that gathered the Church, and to spread the Gospel is the most sacred trust and the most urgent task of the Church. To present Christ as Saviour and Lord to the whole world is the Church's mission on earth. In that witness every believer can and ought to take part. Not all can publicly preach, but all can by word and deed testify to the truth and grace of Christ. The

public testimony is reinforced and extended by the individual influence. It is not a matter of indifference, then, what is preached publicly or witnessed privately. The Christian life implies the Christian creed. There is a view of God, Christ, Man, Bible, and Church which inspires, sustains and develops the Christian life; and there are opinions on these great themes that impoverish and weaken the soul. With no violent interruption, but by a natural transition, we can pass from the description of the Christian life to the discussion of the Christian belief, the Christian view in the light of modern thought.

CHAPTER X.

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

PART II.

CHRISTIAN BELIEF.

X.—THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

(1) In passing from the description of the Christian life to the discussion of the Christian belief, which seems to be implicit in it, and necessary to it, Christ as the immediate object of Christian faith first claims our attention. In revealing God He redeems man, and in redeeming man He reveals man unto himself. What and how the Christian thinks of God and man alike depends on his conception of Christ and of His relation to God and to man. Most text-books of theology begin with the doctrine of God, and then go on to the doctrine of man; but this is not the order of experience, this is not how belief itself advances. Christ Himself first claims faith, and then in His light the believer sees clearly what God is, and what man is. We here follow the guidance of experience.

Although in the New Testament teaching about Christ, the Crucifixion and Resurrection are thrown into the foreground, and it would at first appear as

though His earthly life were insignificant, yet on closer scrutiny we do discover that the memory of His ministry among men was cherished as a sacred possession; it was His Messiahship which the disciples had confessed while He was still with them that invested the death and rising again with the meaning given to them, while these events in turn raised His Messiahship to the higher title of Lordship.

The conception of the person of Christ in the Apostolic Church was undoubtedly determined by the certainty of His resurrection, and the significance consequently assigned to His death; but the valuation of Him, which is consummated in this conception, has its beginnings in His earthly ministry. Only to disciples did the Risen Lord appear, and only those who had begun to believe that He was Messiah felt His death a problem for which they must seek a solution. In beginning with the earthly life we do not depart from the order of Apostolic experience.

Even if we did, we should be following the order of Christian experience generally. There are undoubtedly cases in which the Christian life does begin with the recognition of the crucified and risen Saviour and Lord; but probably most men begin with the grace and truth of the earthly ministry, the Jesus of the Gospels, and from this go

on to the Christ of the Epistles. It is in Him God finds them and meets their needs. The writer himself must go on from Gospels to Epistles for the complete object of his faith; but he will not deny the Christian name to those who cannot go all the way with him, only let them not deny that there is more than they have themselves discovered.

(2) When we look more closely at the Jesus of history, as presented in the Gospels, even when literary and historical criticism has been exercised upon them, we have our attention arrested by three features of His personality—the perfection of His moral character, the absoluteness of His religious consciousness, and the efficacy of His mediatorial function; we are led from the one to the other. As regards the first feature, the perfection of His moral character, the impression He makes on the reverent and earnest soul is that He is sinless and holy. Even those who do not admit the claims which the Christian Church has made for Him allow that His teaching and example afford the highest moral standard for mankind. It is not necessary here to quote any of the tributes of admiration which unbelief has offered to him. Such criticism of particular precepts or single acts as has been offered has again and again been answered, and has not shaken the conviction of His moral perfection in the Christian Church. The writer himself has

examined these charges carefully, and finds his own certainty unshaken.

It has sometimes been asserted that the evangelists idealised Jesus. Accepting the view of modern scholarship that Matthew and Luke are both dependent on Mark, and on another common source, yet both exercised editorial freedom in the use of the material they borrowed; and so we may claim that we have four portraits of Jesus; and yet the four make the same moral impression upon us. Had the portrait been imaginary it would have betrayed the defects of its makers; and such an agreement assures us that we are in touch with fact, not fiction.

Again, the suggestion that the evangelists painted as they saw, but that prior to His ministry Jesus had fought His way from sin to holiness, from error to truth, and that even in His inner life there may have been moral defects which did not appear in word and deed, is disproved by the remarkable fact that Jesus shows no sign of penitence, and offers no plea for pardon. The saints have always confessed themselves sinners; and the absence of this mark of saintliness in Jesus proves either consummate hypocrisy (an incredible conclusion) or moral perfection. If to this be joined the fact that He offers Himself to men as the Saviour and the Judge of sinners, it becomes impossible to

believe that there was any moral stain or flaw in Him.

This moral perfection does not exclude liability to temptation or development of character, unless we are prepared to maintain that moral freedom and growth necessarily involve sin. To be free is to be liable to temptation, to be human is to be subject to growth. It has not been proved, and conscience condemns the assumption, that there can be no moral growth without the abuse of moral freedom. The moral perfection of Jesus does not make the reality of His moral experience less ; the inspiration of His example in seeking the moral good and of His companionship in sharing the moral struggle remains with us undiminished. Nay, may we not say even that he who continues the conflict to its victorious close knows more of its severity than he who abandons it by yielding? The most sympathetic to the fallen are not those who have likewise failed, but those who have stood fast in the evil day. It was under real moral conditions, and not without them, that Jesus maintained His moral perfection.

Here is surely a problem that calls for solution. Heredity, environment, individuality, talent and genius, as known among men, do not explain this unique moral personality in human history. While the miracles of Jesus are regarded by many as

requiring some explanation, His character is accepted as though its perfection forced no question upon us; and yet it is as extraordinary in the moral as His miracles are in the physical realm. There is an explanation which Jesus Himself offers; what He was, did or said was due to His relation to God as His Father. His moral perfection leads us on to His filial consciousness.

(3) While it is the Fourth Gospel which presents more clearly and discusses more fully the absolute religious consciousness of Jesus, yet His relation to God as Son is in the Synoptists implicit in His authority as teacher and example, in the attitude which He assumed towards men as revealing God and redeeming man, and it becomes explicit in one passage (Matt. xi. 25-27, Luke x. 21-22). Jesus revealed God as Father, and He claimed so to represent God to men, that Son is the title which best expresses His relationship to God. His knowledge of God's fatherhood was immediate, while the knowledge men have is mediated by Him, for His grace and truth alone made that Fatherhood a reality for men. Had He not lived as Son, God had not been known as Father. While the Fourth Gospel does, in the prologue, give to the Sonship of Jesus a metaphysical background, yet in the discourses the Sonship is presented as an absolute dependence on, confidence in, and submission to

God as Father. It is a moral and a religious relation, however unique, and however exalted above anything that men in their moral and religious life attain.

It may be that the Fourth Evangelist has by His reflections developed his reminiscences of Jesus' teaching, yet there must have been a germ to be developed. Neither Hebrew piety nor Greek philosophy, nor even both combined, could have originated so absolute a religious consciousness, still less a filial consciousness such as was Jesus'. Contemporary thought does not account for His conception of God. We are entitled to assume that here we have a personal revelation.

It is sometimes argued, however, that Jesus did not claim Sonship in any other sense than He offers it to all men. The tendency of modern thinking is to belittle the distinction between His Sonship and man's. But this is to ignore two facts. First, Jesus did not merely give a new name to, or teach a new truth about God. He lived under human conditions the life of perfect Sonship. He made God's Fatherhood a historical reality for men, through the relation to God He ever sustained. His absolute religious consciousness is just as inexplicable historically as His perfect moral character. Secondly, He does not merely start us on the life of Sonship, which we afterwards ourselves carry on;

but our Christian experience is one of continual dependence on Him. It is only as our faith constantly claims the salvation which is in Him that we know ourselves sons of God. Our sin is ever assailing this sense of Sonship, and it is ever the assurance of His grace that restores to us the certainty of our acceptance as sons of God in the well-beloved Son.

(4) In emphasising this distinction between His Sonship and ours we have already passed to the third feature of the personality of Jesus—the efficacy of His mediatorial function. Begun in His earthly ministry in the penitence and faith He awakened, and the pardon and peace of God He imparted, this saving grace of Jesus is consummated in His Crucifixion and Resurrection, in His Sacrifice and His Spirit; and it is in the interpretation of these facts in the next two chapters that this function of Jesus in human history will be more fully exhibited. At this stage of our discussion it will be enough to lay stress on the fact that Jesus, by bringing men to a knowledge of the Father and their sonship in Him, also set them on the way to follow in His footsteps, and so to gain likeness as sons to the Father. His perfect moral character and His absolute religious consciousness were reproductive through the efficacy of His mediatorial function. A new life in and for God came to mankind

in Him; that life is inexplicable by any of the historical conditions of time or place; it was known and felt to be by those who first shared it from God. The holiness, the truth, the grace of God have come, and been given to mankind in Jesus so uniquely and adequately and finally, that for Christian faith He is God.

(5) It is by evidence such as this, which makes its direct appeal to the moral conscience and religious consciousness of men to-day, that we must justify the Christian belief in the divinity of Jesus. The writer uses the term *divinity* advisedly, as he regards the use of the word to express the likeness of nature between God and Man generally as an abuse of language; and he does not put for it the other term *deity*, as that is sometimes used to deny that God was in Christ as man, that the incarnation was not semblance, but reality, that human conditions and limitations were accepted by the Son of God in becoming man. The moral character, religious consciousness, and mediatorial function of Jesus, which prove His divinity, are unintelligible, unless divinity was manifest in humanity in Him. If the divine and the human nature are opposed, as Christian dogmatics has often represented them as being, then the union of the two natures in one person is a mystery which faith might accept, but could not apprehend. If,

however, God be the perfect personality, and man be personally developing toward perfection, then it is both intelligible and credible that the manward movement of God in grace and the Godward movement of man in faith should coincide in the unity of the one person, both God and Man, or God in Man.

(6) In this argument the virgin-birth, the pre-existence, the fulfilment of prophecy, the performance of miracles, have not been mentioned as the proofs of the divinity, because the confession of Jesus as God should be based on moral and religious grounds. If the conscience and spirit of man do not apprehend God in the perfect Son, saving men from sin to Sonship, the acceptance of all these on historical evidence or by speculative demonstration might be Christian belief without Christian life, and with that we have no concern. The writer himself believes that the perfect moral character of Jesus renders the virgin-birth credible, and that for the absolute religious consciousness of Jesus the necessary background is the eternal God Himself relation to whom must be conceived temporally as pre-existence. In dealing in the next chapter with the work of Christ, it will be shown how He fulfils prophecy in meeting the soul's needs, and in the chapter following the proof of His resurrection as the crowning miracle will lend probability

to all the miracles that went before it. But it is to-day desirable to concentrate our attention on that in Christian belief which is rooted in, and springs out of Christian life, the soul's experience of God in Christ revealing Himself, and redeeming it from sin unto fellowship with Himself in holiness.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST.

XI.—THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST.

(1) The Incarnation is consummated in the Crucifixion, both objectively in the history of Christ and subjectively in the experience of the Christian. The writer, after careful study of "the inner life" of Jesus, as disclosed in the Gospels, feels quite sure that Jesus, from the beginning of His ministry, foresaw the sacrifice for man's salvation as His vocation. Great as was His reserve of utterance, yet there are indications that it was the prophecy of the Servant of Jehovah, who saved by suffering for his people, as depicted in Isaiah liii., which He knew Himself to be fulfilling. He did not try one plan of winning the nation, and, when it failed, turn to another; but He knew from the first what His work from God for man was, although the circumstances of His sacrifice were doubtless gradually disclosed to Him. His repeated attempts to correct the false hopes of the disciples, and to bring them to the true view of the Messiahship, show His desire that His purpose should be understood by them. Not only the

sayings about the ransom for many and the blood of the New Covenant show how Jesus regarded His own death, but still more do His agony in the Garden in anticipating, and His desolation on the Cross in experiencing this sacrifice compel us to regard it as more than a martyrdom: how much more we shall consider in our further discussion.

Christian experience confirms what the history of Jesus suggests. The Fatherhood of God which the believer apprehends in Christ is not man's physical dependence on or natural affinity to God, but it is God's saving love in the forgiveness of sin. It is not the self-realisation of a child of God that the believer in Christ experiences; it is the cleansing and renewing of a sinner, so that he becomes a child of God, of which he is conscious. It is not in Creation or Providence that God is disclosed as Father, but in Redemption. Men strive for the perfection of the Father in the forgiveness of their enemies. The Fatherhood of God is, from the Christian standpoint, revealed, not in nature and history, nor even in the teaching and example of Jesus supremely and finally, but in His Cross. As under the old covenant the penitent had hope of God's pardon, so in the new covenant Jesus, even in His earthly life, assured the sinful of God's grace unto forgiveness; but it was in the sacrifice of the Cross that there came to mankind

the certainty of God's pardon. Again and again in Christian experience have the broken and the contrite hearts sought comfort and succour in the Crucified, and have not been disappointed, but have found God's saving love in Him alone.

(2) That the Cross of Christ is God's sacrifice for man's salvation is attested by the Old Testament and the New alike, by prophetic prediction and by apostolic interpretation. While we do not any longer regard the entire Old Testament ritual as typical, or discover the history of Jesus "told before the event" in the utterances of the prophets; yet we do find, and are entitled to find in the Old Testament sacrifices, a need disclosed which Jesus has fully met and in the Old Testament prophecies, a hope which He has fulfilled. Sacrifice expresses not only man's dependence on, gratitude to, and expectation from God; it is also a confession of sinfulness, and an appeal for reconcilation. While this last feature comes to fullest expression in the Jewish law, it is not altogether absent from the sacrifice of other peoples. However inadequate may have been the conception of sacrifice, it yet witnessed to man's sense of his need of atonement with God. While Messianic prophecy generally was concerned with a King of the house of David, who should rule righteously and prosperously, yet the salvation hoped for from God was not limited by the finer

spirits in Judaism to earthly good; and, as the prophecy already referred to proves, included deliverance from sin. The aspiration of Hebrew piety found its satisfaction in the sacrifice of Christ.

However different are the types of Christian thought and life that meet us in the New Testament, Christ's atoning death is a common article of apostolic faith. At first a problem to Christian belief, the death of Christ came to be recognised as not only a Divine necessity, but as God's sacrifice for man's salvation. In this view of it John and Peter are one with Paul, although Paul's gospel of justification by faith alone, based on his own experience of the insufficiency of the law, necessarily gave a fuller and clearer exposition. The less-developed doctrine of the other New Testament writers is not to be preferred to Paul's, as his experience of salvation in Christ was not abnormal, but typical. Who of the witnesses to the saving love of God in Christ's Cross sounded deeper depths of man's need, or scaled loftier heights of God's grace? In his arguments against the Judaisers there are traces of his Pharisaic theology; for he had to meet his adversaries on their own ground, and to fight them with their own weapons; but when we have stripped off the husk of the temporal and local forms of thought, there remains the kernel of a Christian experience that has a permanent and universal significance. It is the Pauline

Gospel which has again and again been the means of religious revival in the Christian Church.

(3) Attested as is the Cross of Christ as an atoning sacrifice, in the Christian Church there is a twofold attitude—attraction and repulsion towards it. There are many Christians to-day, and the writer is thankful to God that he is one of them, to whom Christ Crucified is still the power and the wisdom of God unto salvation, who, with the apostle, do still glory in the Cross. They do not accept the doctrine of atonement on the authority of the Bible or the Church merely, but because its truth has been proved in their own experience; it is not a burden of mystery that their faith has to carry, but a boon of revelation from God that reason and conscience can welcome. On the other hand, be it admitted, there are also many who find enlightenment, comfort, guidance, and help in the teaching and example of Jesus, to whom the Cross is still an offence. Some of them do not deny that the Cross does mean all that Christian faith has found in it, but it does not mean much to them except as the supreme instance of self-sacrifice, which they are to imitate. Others there are who boldly claim that what they cannot see must not be, who caricature the evangelical doctrine of the Cross until it appears an object for condemnation or contempt, and who are prepared to rob their

fellow Christians of their most precious spiritual possession.

The writer will not express his judgment of such Christians who must be surely insensitive themselves when they can be so ruthless to the sensibilities of other souls. Now he is concerned only with those who are humble and sincere followers of Jesus, and yet find it difficult to apprehend the Gospel in His Cross. It must be frankly admitted that Evangelicalism of the popular kind is not guiltless of so misrepresenting the Cross that serious and earnest men have been repelled. Moral unreality has too often furtively entered into expositions of the atonement; faith has been emptied of moral content, the Cross has not been presented as a moral experience, and the moral motive of God in thus reconciling mankind unto Himself has been obscured. The writer has himself heard evangelistic addresses that made him justly angry because God was so misrepresented.

Even theories of the atonement, which have been current in the Christian Church, must now appear to us inadequate, if not perverse. Nevertheless, it is both wisdom and grace not to reject this popular evangelicalism, or to condemn these defective theories merely; but to discover what gives its power for good to the former, and what is the element of truth in the latter; for thus the Christian

thinker can keep in living touch and loving fellowship with the religious experience of this and former days.

(4) It is not possible within the necessary limits of this chapter to discuss the doctrine of the Cross fully; the writer must as briefly and yet as clearly as he can give his own belief. It will be admitted that the Cross was at least a crime and a martyrdom. It was a crime on the part of those who did Jesus to death; and as in the Cross God's best met with man's worst, so we may regard it as revealing what sin is. It was a martyrdom on the part of Christ, a witness in His blood not only to the truth of God He disclosed, but as that truth was the revelation of God's Fatherhood, to the love which He Himself, and God in Him, bore to mankind. As in the Cross man's worst was met with God's best, we may regard it as revealing what God's love is. As a revelation both of man's sin and God's love the Cross makes a two-fold appeal to man: it calls him to penitence for his sin and faith in God's love, to turn from his sin, and to trust in God's forgiveness. This is the impression the Cross of Christ has made, the influence it has wielded in the history of the Christian Church. This is what is generally known as the subjective view of the atonement, man is at-one'd with God by being brought to penitence and faith. This is true, as far as it goes; but does

it go far enough? The writer believes it does not.

(5) To the subjective view is often opposed the objective, that the Cross not only influences man, but even affects God. The writer himself holds that this opposition disappears if the subjective and the objective be adequately understood from the standpoint of the moral unity of God and man which it is the purpose of the Cross to effect. There can be fellowship between God and man only as man thinks of, feels toward, and wills regarding sin even as God does. Even as his faith must realise how God loves him in forgiving him, so must his penitence realise how God condemns the sin which He forgives. For filial communion with God man must know what God is, not only in relation to himself in loving, but also in relation to his sin in forgiving, which necessarily involves also judging. For paternal communion with man God must make Himself known as He is in relation not only to man, but to man's sin. His love as holy necessarily condemns sin; there is an eternal opposition between God and sin; God would not be God, the absolute perfection, did He not inexorably judge sin. A forgiveness of man that did not express this judgment of God would not only be an incomplete revelation of God, but it would be a positive misrepresentation, for it would make sin appear less

hateful to God than it really is, and would conceal God's necessary antagonism to it.

As God is the moral perfection, of which the moral order of the universe is an expression, we can say with reverence that it is a necessity of His nature to reveal Himself as judging sin even in forgiving it. It is no vindication of an impersonal law, but the revelation of a personal perfection in relation to sin that is the necessity of the Cross. Of this necessity there can be no logical demonstration; it is, when all has been said that can be said in explanation, by a moral intuition that a man will apprehend it, even as Jesus Himself did upon His knees in Gethsemane.

(6) In the Cross Jesus was not held guilty, nor did He feel Himself guilty, of mankind's sin. As guiltless, He was not, and could not be, punished instead of man. He did not offer His shed blood to appease an angry God, as animal sacrifice in its crudest form might suggest. He did not harmonise the conflicting attributes of mercy and justice in God, as theologians have sometimes represented the transaction. Of all such misconceptions we must free ourselves. As the incarnate Son of God, God was in Him, and what He suffered God suffered, and what He achieved God achieved. His sacrifice was the act in time of the eternal holy love of God to forgive, and, in forgiving, to judge sin.

On the one hand, He so loved mankind as to make Himself one with the sinful race, so that man's imperfect penitence was consummated in His perfect sorrow for sin. On the other hand, He so loved God as to make Himself one with the holy love of God in its judgment of sin, so that the condemnation of sin in God's moral order was consummated in His perfect sentence upon it. Human penitence and divine judgment met and were fulfilled in His inner experience. But this inner experience was necessarily expressed in the outer history. While His death may be regarded as an inevitable historical consequence of His life and work, yet He apprehended it as a moral and spiritual necessity, as the Father's claim on His obedience as a Son. He expressed adequately and finally man's penitence and God's judgment in submitting Himself freely to death as sin's doom by divine appointment. The manner of His death was altogether secondary; primary was His obedience to God's will in enduring death as the penalty of sin. He tasted death for every man in the desolation and darkness of His experience on the Cross; and in the passion of the incarnate Son the holy love of God judged in forgiving sin; for the sacrifice of the Son is the moral equivalent of all, and more than all the condemnation of sin in the moral order of the world. Nay, it fulfils that order in showing God the Judge in the Saviour.

CHAPTER XII.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

XII.—THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

(1) There is a very close connection between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. Jesus, in foretelling His death, also foretold his rising again; and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews truly interprets His feelings in the words, "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame." It was the certainty that God would not suffer Him to perish in death that enabled Him to "taste death for every man." On the Mount of Transfiguration, however we may explain the experience, He surely had a foregleam of the glory which awaited Him, even as in the Garden of Agony He had a foretaste of the grief and gloom of the Cross. As at the Baptism, the Voice from Heaven sealed with the Father's approval the Son's self-dedication to His calling, so in the Resurrection Jesus anticipated the Divine acceptance of the sacrifice for man's salvation He was about to offer. Death, conceived by Him as the penalty of sin, was to Him a terrible reality, as both Gethsemane and Calvary witness; and just as the psalmist found

comfort in the face of death in the assurance that when he awoke from that sleep he would be satisfied with God's likeness, so the Son committed His spirit unto God, in the hope of being raised again from the dead.

The significance of the Resurrection for the Apostolic Church can scarcely be exaggerated. The faith in Jesus as the Messiah was laid low in His grave; it was raised up again with the Risen Lord. The disciples had been so possessed by their own expectations of the Messianic reign that they did not, and would not, give heed to Jesus' prediction either of His death or His resurrection. As they were not prepared for the tragedy of the one, so they had no assurance of the victory of the other. The death itself, and, probably, as they were pious and patriotic Jews, the manner of the death still more, quenched their hopes and strained their faith, even if it left their love still clinging to the remembrance of Him. Only when the certainty of His triumph over death was given to them by His repeated appearances to them did their confidence and courage revive. Theirs was no condition of expectancy to generate hallucinations of His Presence with them; theirs rather a mood of despondency, which had to be overcome by convincing evidence that He was indeed risen. Even those who deny the fact of the Resurrection admit

that the belief that Christ was risen was the foundation on which the Apostles built the Christian Church. It was this belief alone that made tolerable to them the thought of His death, and enabled them to discover in it the sacrifice for man's salvation, which they afterwards preached. For them the Resurrection was the Divine confirmation of the Messianic claims of Jesus. It was also the assurance that in preaching the Gospel they were witnessing, not to a dead Teacher, but to a living Lord, still with them, and exercising His power in them. The enthusiasm and energy of Pentecost were inspired by the certainty of the Resurrection of Jesus the Christ, now confessed the Lord.

For the individual believer, the belief in the Resurrection is a necessity of faith. The atoning death of Jesus can be appropriated for salvation only by union with the reconciling life. If Christ were not with us here and now to save and bless, His death would be a fact of history only, not a force for the present renewal of the soul. Only as a man realises the life in Christ can he recognise the death of Jesus as for him. If a man cannot in a living union with Christ identify himself with the moral and religious content of His Cross, if he cannot now be crucified and raised with Christ, dying to sin and becoming alive to God, then that sacrifice cannot be for his salvation. As Christian

life has been already shown to be communion with Christ, the Resurrection is essential to Christian belief.

(2) Admitting the necessity of the belief in the Resurrection to Jesus Himself, to the Apostolic Church, and to the individual believer to-day, some scholars still attempt the separation of the belief from the fact, and try to show that the belief can be explained, while the fact is denied. We can only glance at the ways in which this endeavour is made. That the dead body was stolen from the grave by the disciples, so that they might appeal to the empty grave as a proof that Christ was risen is a hypothesis now abandoned. So also is the theory that Jesus did not really die, but was taken down from the cross in a swoon, and that His recovery for a time was given out by His disciples as a rising from the dead. For both views assume fraud and falsehood as the foundation of the Christian Church—an incredible assumption to the modern conscience generally. Keim had an explanation, which the late Dr. Bruce happily described as the "telegram" theory. He maintained that Jesus had really risen from the dead, but that the appearances of Jesus were not real, but means used by the Risen Lord to convey to His disciples the assurance that He was risen. "A sign of life from Jesus, a telegram from heaven was necessary, after the crushing overthrow

of the Crucifixion, especially in the childhood of humanity. Even the Christianity of the present day owes to this telegram from heaven, first the Lord, and then itself" (quoted in Bruce's "Apologetics," p. 392). In this view the supernatural is, as it were, reduced to a minimum, but is it made any more credible? Is it not just as easy to believe that Jesus was able to manifest Himself to His disciples as that He could dispatch some sort of message to them from heaven?

The explanation current to-day is that the belief of the Apostolic Church rested on "visions," hallucinations of sense. Some believers saw and heard Jesus, not as an objective reality, but as a projection of their own consciousness. In their intense affection, combined with their eager expectancy of His return, their senses were deceived, and they were persuaded that His presence had been really manifested to them. This hypothesis can be met only by a careful consideration of the evidence. Before we turn to this, it may be pointed out that the denial of the objective reality of the appearances does not always involve a doubt of Christ's victory over death. Harnack, for instance, distinguishes the Easter message of the appearances, which he rejects, from the Easter faith that Christ lives, which he accepts. The evidence will show, however, that the one depends on the other.

(3) When Paul, in 1 Corinthians xv., met the heresy that there would be no general resurrection by the assertion that Christ had risen, he gave as proofs of the common Christian belief the appearances of Jesus to Cephas, the Twelve, "five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain until now," James, all the Apostles, and, last of all himself. It is argued that, as this last appearance was of the nature of a vision, such as Paul claims to have had at other times, Paul himself is a witness to the "vision" hypothesis. But Paul does very distinctly separate this appearance which resulted in his conversion from the visions which belonged to his Christian experience. Once convinced that Christ was risen, as he was by this appearance, it is credible that in his ecstatic moods visions should be his; but the visions presupposed the belief, and did not originate it. Not on these abnormal experiences does Paul base his claim to be an Apostle, but on the fact that he had seen Jesus. The truth of his Gospel, his credibility as a preacher, the assurance of the forgiveness of sin, and the hope of deliverance from death—all rested for Paul on the fact of Christ's resurrection. Is it likely that he did not take pains to satisfy himself of the reality of an event on which so much depended? The persecutor was not turned into the preacher of the Christian faith by subjective illusion, and not objective reality.

The differences in the dispositions of the witnesses Paul appeals to besides himself (*e.g.* Peter, who had denied his Master, on the one hand, and James, who had not during the earthly ministry believed in his brother's Messiahship, on the other), and the number of the witnesses, on one occasion the Twelve, on another all the Apostles, on a third five hundred brethren, render incredible the assumption that all were possessed by the same delusion. It is true that in mass movements, when religious excitement runs high, a common hallucination may lay hold on a number of persons; but all the evidence we possess proves that the company of believers was in a state of despondency, unfavourable to such visions, and not in the mood of expectancy which is conducive to them. The enthusiasm and energy of the Apostolic Church were evoked at Pentecost, not prior to, and as a condition of such visions, but consequent on the appearances, and the certainty conveyed by them that Christ was risen. It is certain that the Easter faith in the Apostolic Church rested on the Easter message, and it is merely an assumption that for us such a faith in Christ risen would be possible, did we not find ourselves within the Christian community that delivered to the world this Easter message.

It may be emphasised here that this testimony of

Paul is the earliest testimony in detail we possess. The date of the letter is between A.D. 53 and 57, but Paul represents this teaching as having been already given when he was in Corinth, so we are carried back three years at least to A.D. 50 or 52. But this preaching was not a novelty even then; it was the common belief of the Christian Church within about twenty years of Christ's death that He had risen from the dead, and that there were these proofs of His resurrection. The Book of Acts, though the date of its composition is much later, is being more generally recognised as a trustworthy history, and it carries back this belief to the earliest days of the Church, and rests it on the same foundation, "He showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days." The Gospels are all of later date then Paul's letter, and the discrepancies in their records of the Resurrection do not invalidate his testimony. Of these records, Dr. Sanday says: "No difficulty of weaving the separate incidents into an orderly, well-compacted narrative can impugn the unanimous belief of the Church, which lies behind them, that the Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the third day and appeared to the disciples" ("Outlines of the Life of Christ," p. 180).

(4) There has been much speculation in the

Christian Church regarding the nature of the glorified body of Christ. The difference between the Lutheran and the Calvinistic doctrine of the Supper involved an opposition of view on this question. The Lutheran affirmed the ubiquity, the Calvinist the localisation in heaven of the body. The records in the New Testament suggest that the body was no longer subject to the same physical conditions, for Jesus could appear or disappear at will, and yet was capable of such sensible manifestations as would confirm faith in the objective reality of His appearance. About this matter it is vain to speculate.

But there is one consideration which needs to be insisted on. Some Christian believers reject the statement about the empty grave, and deny the physical resurrection—that is, the participation of the body of Jesus in His triumph over death. They even declare that it is a vulgar materialism to insist on anything but a spiritual resurrection, a survival of the spirit of Jesus, while the body mouldered in the dust. This halting compromise between unbelief and faith does not seem to the writer at all reasonable. First of all, this theory partly accepts and partly rejects the New Testament evidence, which, as a whole, apart from the reference to the empty grave, affirms a bodily resurrection, the transformation of the *natural* into

the *spiritual* body, which Paul anticipated for all believers surviving at the general resurrection. Secondly, it entirely accords with the Christian faith in Christ as the sole and the sufficient Saviour, the supreme Lord as God's Mediator, to regard the victory of Christ over death as so complete that even the body was included in it. It does not follow that there need, or can be, such direct continuity between our natural and our spiritual body; but it is not incredible that in Christ there was this outward sign of the inward reality, the body itself raised to prove that the spirit still lived. The writer does not maintain that the physical resurrection, as distinguished from the spiritual, is essential to Christian faith, but he holds that it is entirely harmonious with it. For, lastly, to him the moral and religious valuation of Christ seems to be so high, raising Him from the human to the divine, that He cannot be enclosed within the natural—that is, the common order of nature as our science knows it, but belongs essentially to the supernatural, so that the miraculous, whether in His own acts or His own resurrection, becomes credible and intelligible. If truth, holiness, and grace are the ultimate and absolute reality in God, it is altogether reasonable to regard nature as subordinate and subservient to the moral and religious purpose of God in Jesus Christ the Lord.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PERSONALITY OF GOD.

XIII.—THE PERSONALITY OF GOD.

(1) God is revealed as Father in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, supremely in the sacrifice of His Cross unto the forgiveness of sin. We must emphasise the fact that it is in human redemption that the divine revelation of Fatherhood is given through Christ. It is to shift the accent from where the New Testament places it, to substitute a universal metaphysical relation of God and man, first disclosed by Jesus in His religious consciousness, for a moral and religious relation between sinful mankind and the forgiving God, first constituted in the reconciling work of Christ for mankind generally, but realised in each man as his faith welcomes the grace of Christ. God is eternally and infinitely love. He wills to save and bless all men. This love becomes historical reality as Fatherhood in forgiving sinful mankind in Jesus Christ. His atonement is intended for, and offered to all men; the Fatherhood of God in Christ is universal. But not all men will as God wills. The Fatherhood in its fulness is received only by those

who in penitence and faith accept God's grace unto forgiveness in Christ; the human sonship which responds to the universal Fatherhood of God is thus limited by man's choice.

(2) We need not dwell any longer, however, on the objective history in which the Fatherhood is revealed, or on the subjective experience in which it is received; but must now fix our attention on two truths about God which are implied in this Christian belief in God's Fatherhood: His personality and His perfection, as each of these has been challenged in modern thought, and regarding each some who would hold the Christian belief find themselves involved in doubt. In this chapter we deal with the personality of God. Whether we can describe God as personal or not depends on the conception of personality we hold. If we must conceive, and cannot but conceive personality as conditioned and limited as human personality is, then assuredly we cannot think of God as personal; but if these conditions and limitations of human personality are not essential to personality as such, we may so conceive God. Localisation in, and dependence on a body, unconsciousness on the margin of a narrowly-bounded consciousness, or even alternating with consciousness, as in swoon or sleep, development from infancy to maturity, and decline from maturity to senility, stimulation to activity by an external

environment, natural or social, individuality as separation from all other personalities—these characteristics of human personality cannot belong to God, for they contradict the conception of infinite and eternal reality.

But man's recognition of conditions and limitations and effort against these fetters on his spirit is itself an evidence that so far as he is personal and realises his personality he transcends the organism he now inhabits, and the environment to which he is through it attached. A subject who distinguishes himself from his body and preserves his unity, identity, and continuity amid the multiplicity and variability of his physical organ, cannot be regarded as essentially limited to such embodiment. A subject who recognises spiritual existence and temporal succession in the world around may be, in his thinking about that world, necessarily conditioned by the forms of time and space, but cannot be wholly or merely in time and space. A subject who is conscious of development, and can direct and control that development according to a purpose approved and adopted, is more than a changing process. A subject who can enter into living communion with others, so as to share increasingly a common life, is more than individual, and has the promise of universality.

(3) Human personality, conscious of imperfection,

points beyond itself to personality as perfect. And this conception of perfect personality is not merely negative, the absence of the human conditions and limitations. The ideals of which man is himself conscious, and which he strives to realise in himself, give a positive content to his conception of perfect personality. His mind seeks truth, his heart craves blessedness, his will strives for holiness, his whole self calls out for love for and from other selves; as a personality he grows as he gains these gifts. If he is to have an assurance that he is not engaged in a vain quest, enlisted in a forlorn hope, following a mocking mirage, he must conceive that these ideals being progressively and partially realised in him are not his own invention, but are the reflections in his consciousness of an eternal and infinite reality; man's imperfect personality for its own advance must think God as thus perfect personality, truth, blessedness, holiness, love. But truth means nothing without a mind that thinks it, blessedness has no worth without a heart that feels it, holiness can reside only in a will that realises it, and love can belong only to a self that welcomes or bestows it.

Some who refuse to speak of God as personal believe in a spirit of truth, blessedness, holiness, love shed abroad through the universe; but this is an ambiguous use of the word, in which we have no

right to take refuge. If we mean only an influence, then it must proceed from a person or persons. If we mean that it is humanity that diffuses this influence we fall back on the position of Comte, and make mankind its own god, a conclusion which man's sense of imperfection and dependence forbids. If we ascribe that influence to some reality other than man, even God, how can we stop short at conceiving the universal spirit as other than personal; for truth, blessedness, holiness, love, all imply a subject that thinks, feels, wills, and gets or gives. If man recognises his own essential personality in these ideals, and is conscious of becoming himself more fully personal as he realises them, if he regards, and cannot but regard, the conditions and limitations of his present mode of existence as not essential to his own personality, we can and should conceive personality as essentially transcending all these conditions and limitations, and essentially as the reality of these ideals; it is in this sense we can conceive God as personal.

(4) Two objections are usually offered to this conception of God as personal. The objection from philosophy is that personality cannot be conceived of as infinite and absolute, since personality necessarily involves conditions and limitations. This objection is due partly to a false conception of personality, and partly to a false conception of

infinitude and absoluteness. With the false conception of personality we have already dealt; we need not think of personality as imperfect in man's present reality, but as perfect in his progressive ideals. The false conception of infinite and absolute, as without limitations or conditions, that is, as entirely indefinite and indeterminate, led Hamilton, Mansel and Spencer to philosophical agnosticism. If infinite and absolute mean that God is everything in general and nothing in particular, that every affirmation about God is a negation of Him, then not only must we not think of God as personal, but we must not think of Him at all. But the true conception of infinite and absolute is self-limited and self-related; the reason, cause, and purpose for what God is, or is not, is not outside of God, but in God Himself. This conception is not only consistent with the conception of personality, but no other conception is so harmonious. Self-limitation and self-relation cannot be ascribed to an impersonal object, but only to a personal subject. Further, it is in his ideals and his realisation of them that man feels himself most master of himself, and least the slave of Nature or of Society. While man can never rise to independence of God, yet in the realisation of his ideals he attains most fully his relative independence of the world. Man's ideals point to the infinite and absolute in their true sense,

and therefore we can think the reality of these ideals—God—as both infinite and absolute.

A few sentences will suffice for the objection from science. Astronomy, geology, biology, anthropology are said to have so proved the insignificance of man in the universe that to think of God as like man is held to be absurd. But, first of all, it is the mind of man that has discovered the vastness of the universe, and has inferred man's relative insignificance; and surely the mind which can so know and think is not insignificant in relation to the universe so discovered and estimated. As the subject of all knowledge, man is greater far than he can appear as an object known in the universe. Secondly, it is an entirely false standard that is applied in comparing man physically with the universe. His meaning and worth cannot be numbered, measured, weighed. The material and the moral and spiritual are incomparable. Thirdly, the ideals of which man claims that God is the reality are recognised by man as of supreme significance and absolute value. Man does not affirm that God is like himself in calling Him personal, but that He is the best that man can conceive. To say that God is super-personal is to degrade these ideals from their supremacy, for it has been shown that their perfect reality implies a subject for which and by which they are. In calling God personal

man affirms of God the infinite and absolute perfection which claims his reverence, obedience and devotion. So far from measuring God by himself, he ascribes to God that in comparison with which the physical universe has less meaning and lower worth, for, lastly, in ascribing personality to God, man does not exalt himself beyond his proper place in the universe, but gives to the universe that interpretation which seems most adequate, not merely to its immeasurable vastness, but also to such rational meaning and moral worth as it displays to the mind discovering something of its secret.

(5) We are entitled thus to think of God as personal, and so there need be no contradiction between reason and faith. Who can doubt that religion needs a personal God? There can be fellowship only when there is likeness. We can have communion with God only if there be in us some resemblance to God. We cannot trust, love, obey the impersonal, or that meaningless abstraction the super-personal. God is immeasurably wiser, better, more blessed and gracious than man is, or can hope to be; but He is truth, holiness, blessedness, love, as man ever strives to become. The Christian religion still more needs a personal God. If God be not essentially personal, the historical personality of Jesus cannot adequately reveal Him as Christian faith holds, for revelation even as communion

implies resemblance. Jesus was certain that He knew God as Father, and that as Son He could reveal Him unto man. It is this certainty of Jesus which is our assurance that God is Father, and that certainty involves God's personality. If God were not personal He could not be revealed through the personality of Jesus, and we as persons could not receive any revelation of Him. The belief in God's personality appears to be essential to Christian life.

(6) It is not intended in these articles to discuss any abstract theological problems; but in closing it may be pointed out that the personality of God, so essential to religion and especially to Christian faith, is made more intelligible by the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. In Christian history, and in Christian experience, God reveals Himself as Father, Son and Spirit, and we should think that God is as He reveals Himself. There is manifoldness in His unity. In God Himself there are distinctions corresponding to these differences in His self-revelation. As in human consciousness, there is the distinction of subject knowing, feeling, willing, loving, and of object known, felt, willed, loved, and the unity of conscious life in and by this distinction, so to conceive God as personal we must think distinction in unity. Our thought dare not and need not go far along these paths, but our mind

is at least capable of perceiving that the Christian doctrine of the Trinity does not make it harder, but much easier for us to conceive God as personal, as mind that thinks truth, heart that feels blessedness, will that realises holiness, self that gives itself to man in the love of Fatherhood and welcomes from man the love of Sonship.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PERFECTION OF GOD.

XIV.—THE PERFECTION OF GOD.

(1) Jesus believed that God was good, that in Himself God was seeking and saving the lost. While He claimed that the Fatherhood was revealed in Him alone, and that He alone had the right on earth to forgive sins, yet He discovered proofs of God's care and bounty in the world around. The God who feeds the birds of the air and clothes the flowers of the field does meet the wants of His children, and guard them in their ways. Even man's sin does not hinder His goodness. He makes His sun to shine, and His showers to fall on good men and bad men alike. Men prove themselves His children as they display the same unbounded goodness. The belief in the divine providence is taken up into, and finds its pledge in, the revelation of the divine Fatherhood in Him. Faith in Christ sustained and confirmed this belief in the Christian Church. Paul has the certainty that all things work together for good to those who love God, and he has also the expectation that God, though His ways are often full of

mystery, will yet have mercy upon all. It is an article of the Christian creed that not only is God perfect in Himself, but that the world gives evidence of, and does not offer a contradiction to, that perfection.

(2) It must be admitted that there is a great deal in the world around us that persistently and vehemently challenges this conviction. The fact of physical and moral evil everywhere confronts us; and if we have a sensitive heart and a vigorous conscience we shall feel the pain, and shrink from the sin in mankind, so that often it will be hard to hold fast the belief that God is good. So oppressed have some thinkers been by this burden of the unintelligible world, that there seemed to be before their minds only this alternative. Either God is not good, or He is not almighty. For if He were both good and almighty, He would not suffer the evil to be. There is sufficient evidence of His goodness to lead us to the conclusion that the evil exists, not because He wishes it, but because He is not powerful enough to hinder it altogether. There is in the universe a force not entirely under God's control. But in this escape from the difficulty, Christian faith refuses to acquiesce. The Christian believes, and cannot but believe, that, even if we cannot solve the problem of evil completely, yet the Fatherhood of God, revealed

in Jesus Christ, gives us the pledge that God's love is subduing all things unto itself, and will yet prove its almightiness.

(3) We hear a good deal about Christian optimism, and Browning's saying is often quoted: "God's in His Heaven, all's right with the world." Taking the word optimism in the strict sense, can we hold that this world is the best possible world, or can we see that here and now the world, as we know it, is all right? Our faith in regard to the present is more accurately expressed by the term, Meliorism, which means that we believe that the world is becoming better; and it is only our hope for the future that can change this meliorism into optimism. The world is getting better until it will be the best. German idealism affirmed that the real is the rational; the universe is the self-unfolding of the absolute spirit. German pessimism at once replied that the world is the blind striving of irrational will. Both positions are exaggerations; and the escape from the contradiction is the recognition that the world-problem is still in large measure insoluble for our thought, because the problem of the world itself has not yet been solved in fact. The idea of evolution here, as in so many other fields of human inquiry, comes to our help. The world is still in the making; and what our judgment of its worth must be concerned with is

not so much what it now is, as what it promises to become. Oppressed by the world's mystery we are saved by hope, but a hope that is not the baseless fabric of a dream, but rests on the solid foundations of facts truly understood. From the Christian standpoint evolution spells redemption. Men are being delivered out of the bondage of iniquity into the liberty of the glory of the Sons of God. What we must never allow ourselves to forget is that the sin of mankind faces us not as an unconquerable foe, but as a foe that is being conquered, the pledge of whose subjection is already given in the Cross of Jesus Christ. This process of redemption from sin moreover does not stand out in its growing brightness from the unrelieved gloom of a physical evolution in which evil abides unchanged. The Darwinian theory of the struggle for existence, if we look at the product as well as the process, does not give us merely a nature "red in tooth and claw," but a nature in which there is a steady upward trend to more highly-developed and better-adapted organisms. There is progress in nature and in history, and for the Christian that progress is the fulfilment of the purpose of God in Christ; and therefore we must ever look in the world, as it now is, for tokens of that far-off divine event to which the whole Creation moves.

(4) It is a source of confusion of thought that our word *evil* means both suffering and sin, as it is of the utmost importance for a sound conclusion to our inquiry that we should carefully distinguish the first, or physical, from the second, or moral, evil. While there are some thinkers to whom the suffering in the world is a greater difficulty than the sin, there can be no doubt that from the Christian standpoint sin is a greater problem than suffering. In regard to physical evil a few considerations may be advanced, which, if they do not offer a final or complete solution of the problem, suggest at least that it is not as *insoluble* as it at first appears. With the keenest sympathy for the sufferings of the lower animal creation, we may, nevertheless, recognise that there is good reason offered by biology for the assumption that the actors in this drama of "the struggle for existence" themselves feel far less pain than appears to the human spectators, and that this world is rather a pageant of the joy of living.

With respect to the suffering of man, three facts claim our attention. First of all, the physical catastrophes, which often involve man in ruin and misery, such as earthquakes, storms, floods, pestilences, result from the forces in accordance with the laws of an order of Nature, the general operation of which is beneficent. That it was

either possible or desirable that the order of Nature should be beneficent only, to the exclusion of any such physical catastrophes, we are far too ignorant to be able to affirm. The general beneficence of that order, however, must be set over against the occasional injury inflicted by it on man.

Secondly, that order in the suffering it inflicts can often be seen to be disciplinary or educative. There are moral offences Nature punishes with painful or hurtful physical consequences. Human ignorance, indifference, and indolence find in Nature their chastisement. In his contest with Nature for safety and comfort man develops his skill and his strength. Human industry and society is man's reply to Nature's challenge; and who shall say that Nature was not beneficent in the severity that has evoked such a response in human progress? Many physical evils man brings upon himself; human society is responsible for many of the sorrows and needs of individual men and women, and here the problem of physical evil passes over into the problem of moral evil.

Lastly, in disease and death, as we see this evil around us, we do face a mystery that cannot be altogether removed. Yet the burden can be a little lightened. Saintliness has been learned in the school of suffering. Human hearts are made more tender in ministering to pain, or in passing through

bereavement. The death of those whose life-course is not fully run has been for the hallowing of other lives. Birth, growth, and death are a necessary sequence. Were it better that fewer lives were indefinitely prolonged, or that life were more abundant, if briefer? Without the hope of immortality, however, death were an intolerable enigma. It may be objected that God might have reached all these goals by some other course. But what do we know of the limits His wisdom and love impose upon His power? There are impossibilities for God, only these are not imposed on Him by some alien power outside of Him, but by His own perfection. Because His wisdom is often to us unfathomable, shall we rashly affirm that His power is not immeasurable? Because His love fulfils itself in ways past finding out, shall we say that His love is fettered by His weakness? We can easily imagine that the world might have been otherwise. What, however, it is wise and right for us to ask is only this, can we see an ever-larger good arising out of all its evil!

(5) We cannot deal with the problem of physical evil apart from the problem of moral evil. If there be no difference between suffering and sin, then the problem of physical evil is made greater and not less. If man be a moral being, then there is so much of the physical evil of the world for

which as a consequence of his action he, and not God, is responsible, and there is much more physical evil for which he may not be directly responsible, and which nevertheless finds some explanation as disciplinary or educative. Deny man's responsibility altogether, and God becomes, not only directly responsible for all the physical evil, but for much of it no reason whatever can be found. In the next chapter we must come back to the question of the liberty of man. Meanwhile we must assume it. Man is responsible for all his own acts, and for the consequences of these acts to himself and others. Even if man, in his evolution, emerged gradually from the non-moral into the moral stage, there was a point at which he became conscious that he could choose, that there was a right or a wrong course to be chosen, and that he was responsible for the results of his choice. Conscience and volition may have had very lowly beginnings in the race, but man, as we are now concerned with him, is capable of sinning, and is conscious of himself as sinful. Would not the total of physical evil in human history be greatly reduced, if it were not for "man's inhumanity to man"?

But it may be said, is not God responsible for endowing man with the freedom he has abused, and thus responsible for all the consequences of

that abuse? Man's acts are not God's acts, and yet there is the responsibility of the Creator for the creature. In seeking a solution of this problem of moral evil two facts arrest our attention. Firstly, a moral being must be free to choose, and this freedom necessarily involves the possibility of the wrong being chosen. God might have made a puppet, but not a person, had this possibility been excluded by Divine power. Secondly, the possibility having become an actuality, God's perfection is impugned by man's sin only if it can be shown that God is not bringing moral good out of moral evil. If God is saving the sinner, so that the freedom which was abused in sinning is being restored to its proper use in penitence and faith; if, instead of an innocence which has known no evil, God is working in man a holiness, which having known, has overcome evil, then the problem of moral evil even is finding its solution.

(6) There remains still one part of the problem unsolved. On the one hand the grace of God in Christ, though it may for faith and hope abound more than the sin of man, has not yet altogether banished sin from God's world. On the other hand, even if we are sure that Christ shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied, we have no certainty that every soul shall be saved. It may seem to us now that the salvation of every sinner

is a necessity for the solution of the problem; but in view of the solemn warnings of the Holy Scriptures, and the sad and stern facts of human history, it is both more modest and reverent for us not to affirm that this can be the only final solution. Of one thing our experience of God's grace in Christ does make us certain, and it is this, that God's love will fulfil itself in man, and man's love shall be satisfied in God's. When that holy temple of a redeemed humanity is completed, may we not even dare to believe that the glory of it shall so fill the universe itself with the undimmed radiance of love that all the dark places of physical evil even shall be filled with the light of God, and God's perfection shall be manifested fully in the world, for God shall be all in all?

CHAPTER XV.

THE LIBERTY OF MAN.

XV.—THE LIBERTY OF MAN.

(1) The Christian revelation of God's Fatherhood is unto the redemption of man by the forgiveness of sin. The necessity of forgiveness implies the reality of sin, and the reality of sin involves the possibility of choice or freedom. To the Christian view of man liberty is essential. Whether man is free or not is not a question for the philosophers and the theologians alone, but comes home to every man in his own moral life. (i.) The range and depth of a man's personality depends on the measure in which he exercises self-judgment. Is he quick in detecting any failure in duty in himself; is he keen in his shame and sorrow when he fails? This self-judgment, however, is an illusion if whatever a man has done he must have done, and could not have done otherwise. In every choice, in every reproach of conscience for having chosen wrongly, a man affirms his freedom, even although he may be entirely innocent of any knowledge of the philosophical or theological arguments for or against liberty. (ii.) No less do men assume the

freedom of others in their judgments of others. When we praise a deed of heroism or sacrifice, we assume that the doer might have chosen the safer and the easier paths. When we blame a man for a wrong he has committed we take for granted that he might have done right. In our judgment of others charity requires that we make all possible allowance for all the moral conditions which made the wrong choice easy, and the right decision hard; but it is only sentimentality which always pities and never blames. (iii.) Further, the whole social order, with its law guarding the relations of men to one another, and its punishments for the breach of its requirements, assumes that they are not under any necessity, but can keep the laws, if they will, and that they deserve to suffer if they disobey. Government would have no moral justification at all if the punishment of crime were suffering inflicted on moral impotence. (iv.) For our present purpose most important of all is this last consideration. The relation of man to God is in all religions, conspicuously in the Christian, a moral relation—that is, it implies that man is free either to trust, love and obey God, or not, and that whether he enjoys God's approval or rests under God's condemnation depends on the attitude towards God that he assumes voluntarily, and not of necessity. So important is the issue whether man is free or not.

(2) But it may be objected, if man's freedom is so bound up with man's religious and moral life, is he likely to doubt or question it? Is it not the philosopher or theologian who ruthlessly disturbs the plain man in even raising this problem? Doubtless there are many Christian believers who have never felt this difficulty, and the last thing the writer would desire would be to disturb their moral certainty. But scientific and philosophical thought is not confined to schools now, but through cheap popular literature gets down to the street. There is good ground for the fear that the moral conscience of many is being blunted, and their religious consciousness is being darkened by assumptions that man is not free, and that, therefore, sin has no meaning. It is a fact that even in Christian teaching the necessity of forgiveness and the reality of sin are not as confidently affirmed as in former times. A writer like Mr. Blatchford, in a plea for social sympathy towards the fallen, makes an attack on the Christian view of moral responsibility; and our disagreement from such views, and still more from the way in which they are expressed, should not be allowed to conceal from us the extent of their influence to-day.

(3) The denial of man's freedom means nothing less than the rejection of the testimony of the moral conscience and the religious consciousness.

That man is free cannot be proved otherwise than by the witness that man has in himself of the possibility of choice between two courses of action, of the obligation to choose that which conscience approves, and to avoid that which conscience condemns, and of the good or ill desert he brings on himself according to his choice. This is an ultimate moral fact beyond which we cannot go. And here religion reinforces morality. The sense of sin in the presence of God, disturbing the soul's communion with God, the desire for forgiveness, by which that fellowship may be restored, the experience of salvation, in which the soul is saved from the moral bondage in which sin had resulted, the certainty of moral progress unto perfection through the Divine grace freely received in human faith—this is an ultimate religious fact. Whether we can meet all the intellectual difficulties which the assertion of human liberty is held by many thinkers to involve or not, it is well for us to recognise that there is a moral and religious certainty of freedom, the denial of which lays morality and religion alike low in ruins.

(4) These intellectual difficulties can, however, be met, and it is worth making the attempt to meet them, so that there should be no schism between reason, conscience, and spirit in man. The first attempt to disprove freedom is the psychological

argument of determination by motives. It is admitted that we are conscious of choosing between two courses of action, but it is maintained that we are under an illusion in supposing that we have chosen. Just as the heavier weight brings down the scale in which it is placed, so the stronger motive determines every choice. Our consciousness is the battle-ground on which two armies engage, and the victory always goes to the bigger battalions. But how do we know which is the strongest motive? We call it the strongest because we decide in accordance with it. Otherwise we should not know whether it was strongest or not. What gives it its strength? Is it not its relation to the total self? A man chooses, not to gratify a desire for its own sake, but because its gratification appears to him as offering more satisfaction to his own self, than the gratification of any other competing desire. If a man prefers honesty to prosperity, it is not because the impulse to honesty is itself stronger than the desire for prosperity, but because the man decides that it is better for himself to be honest than prosperous. If a man decides to indulge his passions rather than obey his conscience, he does not suppose, if he is honest with himself, that his passions have got the better of his conscience, and that he himself has had nothing to do with the decision; he prefers for himself to risk the reproach

of conscience than to give up the pleasure his passions bring him. Here the account that the consciousness gives to itself of the whole process of choice must be final. This psychological determinism is due to the logical fallacy of a false analogy. The desires, as motive, and the will itself are compared with physical forces, and the process of choice is regarded as the action and reaction of the forces on one another. Our common use of language makes this analogy plausible. We speak about our desires and our will as if distinct from ourselves; but a close scrutiny shows that our desires are ourselves desiring and our wills are ourselves willing. The self is a unity and identity, it is one and the same in all thinking, feeling, willing. It is the self that desires both the good and the bad, and it is the same self that in willing gives effect to the desire either for the good or the bad.

(5) Materialism, would, however, deny that it is merely an analogy which in the reasoning of determinism is employed; for it opposes to the claim for human liberty, the physiological argument of the dependence of the mind on the brain. As we are all aware we dwell in a body, and are more closely affected in our mind by our body than the metaphor of a dwelling would suggest. We are in our present condition soul-in-body. All our thoughts, feelings, wishes, and decisions are

accompanied by changes in the brain; as we discover when a headache reminds us that we have put an undue strain upon our minds. This correspondence of mind and body has been described by the term psycho-physical parallelism. But the term is inadequate, for there seems to be a closer relation than correspondence. Light reaches our eye, and we see the sun; we will to walk, and our feet begin to move. The testimony of our consciousness is distinct, in sensation the initiative is with the body, in volition with the mind. But even in sensation the mind has initiative, we can will to attend or not. By concentration of thought we can withdraw our attention from the outer world, and the sensations that may come to us from it. Materialism assumes, however, that the mind is passive, and the body alone active. This is an assumption that consciousness contradicts. We are conscious of activity in willing, and even when we seem most passive, as in sensation, we can give or withold attention. Neither physiology nor psychology can prove that our inner life is only the effect of which the brain is cause, as the transition from physical or chemical changes in body (or brain) to thought is unthinkable. The dependence of mind on brain is not absolute, and in willing to act we are constantly assuming, and find justified the assumption that the body depends on the mind. The

objection can be met on this narrower ground of the relation of body and mind; against it, too, are all the other considerations against materialism itself.

(6) Assuming that it is the self that chooses, the further question emerges, what is it that makes the self what it is before it has in any way determined its own character by its volitions? Against liberty may be brought in answer to this question the historical argument of the constitution of the individual by heredity and environment. Without letting ourselves be involved in the controversy at present being waged by biologists as to whether acquired characters are transmissible or not, we may be content with accepting the testimony of experience that children resemble their parents not only physically, but even mentally and morally. It is probable that more of that resemblance in mind and character is due to the influence of the parents in the earliest years, when the environment is most potent, than has usually been recognised. At one time heredity was regarded as an inexorable fate that decided the destiny of each child at birth, but this exaggeration is now abandoned. The tendency to-day is to emphasise environment rather than heredity as the most formative influence in childhood and youth. As between these two factors in personal development we need not now decide, but may admit as fully as the facts demand how much each

personality depends in its development on both. But do these factors fully explain what each man becomes? No two persons are exactly alike. There is an individuality which cannot be explained by a varying compound of ancestral qualities. This individuality does assert itself, and gets the better of its heredity, and rises above its environment. How could there be progress in history at all if there were not an ever-fresh source of life in the succeeding generations? But self-consciousness is the last court of appeal. A man knows himself not merely the product of his heredity and environment, but feels himself bound to be the master of both.

(7) Before leaving this subject we must glance at one more objection, the theological argument of the absolute bondage of the human will through sin. Paul, in Romans vii., confesses his moral impotence. That personal confession has been turned into a dogma by Augustine. To magnify God's grace in saving he thought it needful to exaggerate the consequence of Adam's fall in the total depravity of all his descendants. That the will is weakened by wrong choice is a fact of experience; that a man can be enslaved to a bad habit must be acknowledged. The Christian knows that God's grace alone can enable him to become what he would be. But we go beyond experience in affirming of any

man absolute moral impotence. Even the slave of vice has not exhausted his moral possibility, and the appeal of the Gospel may wake in him enough of freedom to choose the deliverance Christ offers. Faith which claims the Divine grace for renewal is an exercise of freedom. Omnipotent grace could not morally renew absolute human impotence, for the moral process of regeneration involves at least man's free assent to God's action. The holy Spirit does not suppress human personality, but so energises it that the man is most free who is most Spirit-filled.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE IMMORTALITY OF MAN.

XVI.—THE IMMORTALITY OF MAN.

(1) In a previous article the Christian hope was dealt with. This embraces not only a kingdom of God on earth, but a future life of perfection, glory, and blessedness for every believer. Just as the Christian doctrine of sin assumes man's liberty, and so responsibility for his acts, so the Christian doctrine of the future life assumes that death need not end all, but that man is immortal, at least in the sense that he may here and now begin a life in God which death cannot destroy. It is on this eternal life that the emphasis is thrown in the New Testament. The Bible does not expressly teach the natural immortality of the human soul in the sense in which philosophers have sought to demonstrate it, but neither does it teach that only those who believe in Christ survive death. There is a solemn warning to the wicked of a penalty which awaits them in the future life. The view of man which is distinctive of Christianity, the worth which it assigns to him, and the solicitude on his behalf which it ascribes to God, all suggest that even in

the sinner death does not end all, but that the moral and religious development here begun is completed in the hereafter.

(2) While it must be insisted that the Christian hope does not rest on argument, but on experience of the eternal life in Christ, and the assurance which His own victory over death and His living presence now gives; yet, on the other hand, when the belief in immortality is doubted or denied, it is for the confirmation of the hope if, on the one hand, the objections to the belief can be met, and, on the other, it can be shown that the belief is reasonable, that the Christian certainty can be supported by arguments which appeal to the common mind. It is being contended by some that spiritualism can offer us the evidence which we need; but the writer feels convinced that even if the proofs of continued existence which spiritualism professes to offer us were trustworthy, yet the kind of continued existence which it seems to show us would be no confirmation, but a contradiction of the Christian hope. The alleged communications from the dead do not give us any assurance of the blessed, glorious, and perfect immortality for which the Christian sets his hope on Christ. The objections must be met from the Christian standpoint, and the arguments must be formed on, and not below, the level of Christian thought, feeling, and purpose.

(3) We may first examine the objections to man's immortality. They are all based on views which contradict Christian thought as regards the nature of man, the position of man in the universe, the worth of man's life, and the relation of man to God.

(i.) Materialism is as contradictory of the belief in man's immortality as in his freedom. If soul be but a function of brain (whether we hold that consciousness only emerges when the organism has reached a certain stage of development, or maintain that in every atom there is mind-stuff), then it necessarily follows that with the dissolution of the body personal consciousness ceases, even if the bits of mind-stuff may endure as long as the atoms to which these are attached. But if mind transcends the matter which it organises and controls, then the dissolution of the body does not necessarily involve the destruction of the soul. In the previous article the relation of mind and body has already been discussed, and it is not necessary to repeat here the considerations there advanced. Some specially relevant to the present subject may, however, be added. The mind is conscious of unity, although the body is made up of many parts; the soul has a sense of its identity in spite of the manifold changes through which the body is passing. In the body there is constant material decay and renewal, its atomic constituents do not remain the same, yet the

man knows himself the same person in childhood, boyhood, manhood, old age. The activities of the soul, thinking the truth, willing the right, getting and giving love, seeking the good, which are most closely bound up with the hope of immortality, show least attachment to bodily functions. Man in his higher life is capable of an increasing detachment from the life of sense. These considerations do not prove man's immortality, but show that the dependence of soul and body is not demonstrably such as to necessitate its denial.

(ii.) An objection can be urged against man's immortality from the standpoint of naturalism similar to that offered to the personality of God. It may be said that man's position is so insignificant in the universe that it is ridiculous to suppose that he can be exempted from the universal law of dissolution. To this objection the same answer as has already been given should be offered. It is the worth of that in him, for which alone immortality is claimed, which is the warrant of the claim. It is not for what he holds in common with the material universe that he expects continuance, but for that in him which distinguishes him as personal from all objects around him. It is because the ideals he is realising are so absolutely valuable that man expects to survive physical dissolution. One of the arguments for immortality, to which we must

return, is thus the answer to be given to this objection.

(iii.) It may be, it has been urged, that as this life is not worth living, its continuance is in no way to be desired. As for Hindu thought existence was necessarily misery, the continuance of existence was an evil to be dreaded, and so its cessation a good to be sought. The salvation Buddhism offered was rest from the pain of living in Nirvana, either extinction, or at least unconsciousness. Pessimism is, however, an attitude to life which is alien to the active and the progressive West. Most men find life good enough to wish that it should go on to be still better. A mood is not an argument of any weight for those who do not share it. Those who are living the Christian life and are cherishing the Christian hope are not likely to be affected by this belief in the worthlessness of life itself. The misery of the present life may suggest, and has suggested to the sufferers even, the expectation of a future life, in which there will be some compensation in joy gained for the pain now endured. Only an utter despair of life can lead to an acquiescence in death as good.

(iv.) Those who have not a firm grip of the truth of the personality of God and the personality of man, and the personal communion between them as the highest good, are alone likely to be misled into

the belief that Pantheism offers something higher than the hope of personal immortality in its inevitable conclusion that at death the spirit sinks back into, is lost in, the universal Spirit; for essentially one with that Spirit, its sense of separateness due to the body must cease when the body perishes. When a Christian congregation sings the words, "Till in the ocean of Thy love, We lose ourselves in heaven above," it does not mean literally the re-absorption of human personality from its separateness in the Universal Spirit. For personal communion with God in love, reverence, obedience, is morally and religiously something much higher than the cessation of personal consciousness in God. One may venture to believe that a society of the blessed is worth more to God than His solitary beatitude.

(4) In meeting the objections to the belief we have already touched on some of the arguments for immortality. The metaphysical argument from the soul's nature as indivisible may be passed over, as it does not belong to the same realm of moral and religious values as the Christian hope.

(i.) The judicial argument comes to us with the support of two great thinkers like Butler and Kant. For Butler this life was a period of probation, and the hereafter the scene of judgment. Kant found here no correspondence between character and condition and looked to the future for an adjustment

between a man's worth and his weal. To put the argument as simply as possible, on earth now good men suffer and bad men prosper, and yet conscience demands that the righteous shall be rewarded and the wicked punished. We must expect a future life which will remove this contradiction of the divine justice in the present lot of men, in which the good will reach the blessedness they deserve and the bad endure the misery which is their due portion. The New Testament confirms the apprehensions of the human conscience, regarding the judgment to come, when every man shall receive good or evil, when corruption will be reaped from the flesh, and life everlasting from the Spirit. This is a reason for believing in immortality, although the Christian will not desire immortality that he may be rewarded, or that others may be punished.

(ii.) A better reason for the Christian hope is the moral argument. Kant states this argument. Immortality is a postulate of the practical reason, because in this life men never attain or can attain the perfection the categorical imperative demands. We can put the reasoning more generally. Man has ideals which he is seeking here to realise. Not only does he in fact fail to realise them fully in this life, but he knows that, on the one hand, this life is too short to complete his personal development toward perfection, and that, on the other, there are

conditions in his body and surroundings which necessarily limit his possibilities of attainment. It is because these ideals have so supreme an authority for his reason and conscience that he is persuaded that his personal development in realising them will not be arrested by death, but will be continued and completed hereafter. It is not merely because he desires immortality that he expects it, for there are desires which carry in themselves no warrant for their gratification. But these ideals have a claim on man for realisation, apart from his personal wishes altogether, and it is the absoluteness of their claim which justifies the expectation that man will have the opportunity of meeting these august demands on him. It is not on what a man wishes to be, but on what he knows he ought to be that the belief in immortality rests.

(iii.) Tennyson, in "In Memoriam," offers us another line of reasoning—the logic of the heart. Human affection in the measure of its intensity, elevation and purity, demands continuance, challenges death's right to end the loving fellowship of kindred souls. This may be called, for want of a better term, the social argument. There is an affection which is rooted in natural relationship, and never rises much above a family instinct; that does not suggest immortality. There is what calls itself love, but is only lust, animal appetite, sensual

passion, and that deserves to perish with the body. But there is also a sacred devotion which joins souls together in the highest interests of life, and that has a claim as absolute for continuance as man's quest for truth or effort after holiness. As Jesus indicated, when questioned about the woman with seven husbands, there are earthly relationships that are only of the earth, and it were misery if souls were held fast in their bondage hereafter. But there is a union of spirit to spirit which has in its own immeasurable worth the claim of immortality.

(iv.) Lastly, there is the religious argument, which has the sanction of Jesus Himself. God is the God of the living, and, therefore, those whom He has called into fellowship with Himself He will not suffer to perish in death, but will satisfy in their awakening from death's sleep with His likeness, and will bring to His presence, where there is fulness of joy for ever and ever. Religion, even without the Christian assurance, is itself an argument for immortality. The communion of God and man in religion, in the measure in which it is real, has the assurance that, as God has lifted man so high in his fellowship with Himself, He will not cast him from Himself into the darkness and desolation of the grave. God's companions cannot become death's victims. Because God has come so

near to man, shown Himself so clearly, and given Himself so fully in Jesus Christ, to the Christian immortality is certain, for there is nothing in heaven, earth, or under the earth that can separate him from the love of God in Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

XVII.—THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

(1) Religion is the relation between God and man, in which the human mind receives the divine truth, the human heart responds to the divine love and the human will is surrendered to the divine purpose. This is the ideal of religion, in which human personality finds its fulfilment in this personal union with the divine personality. In all religions, however crude their beliefs or corrupt their rites, there is this movement of the human towards the divine, man's desire and effort to make God's gifts his own. In the Christian religion this movement of man to God is completed, because in the person and work of Christ it meets the consummated movement of God to man. In Christ God is revealed and man redeemed. The glory of the Son of God, however, casts its radiance backward as well as forward, on what has been as well as on what is yet to be. As in Christ God meets man, and man meets God, so in all religion, wherever the soul has sought for the living God, He has been found. If religion be not a subjective illusion, but

correspond to objective reality, wherever there is sincere religion there is also genuine revelation. Man's approach to God is due to God's approach to man.

(2) While we do not now, as was done formerly, distinguish one religion as true from all others as false, yet there is a warrant in the facts for the distinction of universal and special revelation, which is implied in the teaching of the Scriptures. Paul declares that the wrath of God is revealed against the Gentiles, because in their idolatry and immorality they have disregarded and disobeyed the revelation of God in nature and in conscience. The study of comparative religion in our own day has made our outlook more hopeful than Paul's in this matter. In the great religious personalities, in the religious literatures of other peoples than the Hebrew nation, we can discover a divine revelation which has not been altogether in vain, but has found some response in human religion. Yet a comparison, sympathetic as regards other faiths, candid as regards our own, justifies the assertion that in the Hebrew nation and in the Christian Church there has been an action of God in human history, which in its moral and spiritual result is altogether unique. No other national development has such evidence of a divine purpose being fulfilled, and no other religious community has shown such tokens of divine power being exercised.

(3) This revelation of God, which we may, on the ground of an historical comparison, distinguish as general and as special, is *to* man and *through* man. It is man in contact with the world, in the exercise of his powers, who finds a divine meaning and aim in nature and in history. Not all men, however, are equally sensitive to the divine presence, responsive to the divine purpose. There is an enlightening of the mind, a quickening of the heart, and a strengthening of the will necessary for the apprehension and appreciation of the divine revelation. The majority of men have depended, and do still depend, on elect personalities, for the kindling and keeping aflame of the light of God in their souls. Seers and saints mediate the life in God to their fellows. The founders of the great religions have displayed this moral and religious quality. God possessed them, illuminated them, and controlled them in a higher degree than those whom they taught and led. This presence, purpose and power of God in these religious personalities we call inspiration, and in this wider sense it cannot be denied to all who have so witnessed to God that, through them, God has become known to men. This inspiration has had degrees, and the measure of it is subjectively the consciousness of the person inspired, but objectively the worth of the revelation of God which has come to man through him. At a lower stage of religious

development there may be even a more intense consciousness of being divinely possessed than at a higher stage, when the communication of the divine truth and grace is even fuller. The intensity of the emotion does not always correspond with the purity and elevation of the revelation of God imparted. But this we may lay down as a general principle: that, wherever a man has been a channel of the divine revelation, there his own personality has been fitted for that function by the divine inspiration.

(4) The claim that the Christian Church makes for the Bible is this: that, as in this literature God is most clearly revealed, so its writings are most fully inspired. The Bible is the literature of the special revelation; it is not only the record of God's action in human history to reveal Himself and redeem man, but it is also the expression of the religious life in man which was the human response to the divine action. In it religion is inseparably united to revelation, for the fulfilment of God's purpose is in man's submission, and the communication of God's grace is in man's acceptance. But before we attempt to define more closely the purpose of the revelation and the nature of the inspiration in reference to the Bible, we must meet the challenge of the worth of the Bible, which is not uncommon to-day.

(i.) The first ground on which the Christian claim for the Bible is challenged is the existence of other sacred literatures, to which some reference has already been made. The study of these writings by European scholars, and the popularisation of the results of their study led at first to an estimate far more favourable than their real character warrants. A collection of golden sayings of Confucius or Buddha, selected from a mass of teaching of baser metal, does not represent what Confucianism or Buddhism as historical religions have been, or still are. Judging these holy books as generously as we can, we may still confidently maintain that the Bible in its moral elevation and spiritual illumination is unique.

(ii.) The second ground of this challenge is the opposition of the Bible and science. The writer can well remember when Christian theologians were vexing their souls to bring about the reconciliation of geology and Genesis. But we have happily advanced beyond that position. We now recognise that the Bible is not meant to make us wise unto physical science, but unto salvation. It does not distress us to find that inspired men had only the knowledge of their own time and people as regards all the matters with which science deals, and we do not now claim that the Bible has the authority of an up-to-date

encyclopædia. What the Bible reveals to us science cannot either affirm or contradict. It is true that there is an opposition between the naturalistic view to which science leads some men, and the supernaturalism that pervades the Bible; but a Christian philosophy can and does challenge the assumption of naturalism, and dares to defend the standpoint of the Bible as more reasonable.

(iii.) It is a common impression among the half-educated in these matters that we must acquiesce in the depreciation of the Bible as the result of modern scholarship. For this impression a timid orthodoxy is in some measure responsible. The Higher Criticism is still a terror to some believers. But questions of date, authorship, literary character, and historical trustworthiness of the writings in the Bible may be answered differently by criticism and by tradition without affecting at all the moral and religious value of these writings. Truth is true, whether it comes from Moses or later prophets; wisdom is wise, whether Solomon or a later sage spoke it. Most of the problems about the Bible with which modern scholarship deals have nothing to do with the estimate of its value. It is a significant fact that not a few of even the more advanced scholars are devout and confident Christian believers. To the writer the Bible as illumined by modern scholarship means much more than it did

when he still held the traditional views. If modern scholarship tries to force the Bible into the Procrustes' bed of naturalism, it does then assail the stronghold of faith, but this naturalism can be and ought to be fought on its own ground, and is neither a necessary nor a legitimate result of modern scholarship as applied to the questions about the Bible with which it is competent to deal.

(5) Not only can this challenge be met, but the vindication of the worth of the Bible is "writ large" in national history, in individual experience, and in missionary effort. The pragmatic test is this, that is true which works, and if we understand the test as meaning efficiency for the highest moral and religious ends we may apply it to the Bible. Where the Bible has been allowed to influence manners and morals, commerce and politics, belief and worship, it has, when properly understood and honestly obeyed, been one of the potent factors of human progress. The nations which stand in the forefront of other lands as regards moral and religious influence are the nations that have cherished the Bible. In the individual experience also the Bible proves its worth in nourishing the life of the soul in God. Humbly and reverently studied, it brings God to men, and men to God; it proves an unerring guide into the

way of salvation and along the path of sanctification. God in Christ through the Spirit does reach and change the lives of men in the reading of this book. Confirmation of this power in the Bible comes to us daily from the mission field. The missionary's first endeavour, when he has acquired the language, is to translate the Bible, and already in more than four hundred tongues the whole or part of the Bible makes the truth and grace of God known. Where the missionary has not been, or where the missionary is withdrawn, this witness for God works savingly. If we have only information and imagination enough to realise in some not altogether inadequate measure what the Bible has ever done, and still is doing, for the uplift Godward of mankind, we shall not be carried away by any fashion of the hour, but shall set our seal to the testimony the Christian Church bears to the supremacy of the Bible in human literature.

(6) It is as the literature of revelation that the Bible has its worth. To determine what we are to look for in the Bible, we must define the purpose of revelation. God makes Himself known to men, not to satisfy speculative curiosity about His nature and attributes, and when theologians have made such discovery the object of their study, they have imposed on the Bible an alien character. God makes Himself known to men that he may make

them His children in trust, love, and obedience. The purpose of revelation is not theoretical, but practical. We must know enough of God for this personal filial relation to Him, and that knowledge is given, but not the solution of all the problems of our thought. As men are sinful, God, to make them His children, must redeem them from sin. Hence the practical purpose of the Bible is also redemptive. Its aim is to make wise unto salvation by bringing to men the Saviour from sin that they may know and so accept Him. As the Old Testament is the record of the promise of and the preparation for this redemption in a national history, so the New Testament is the testimony to and the interpretation of the fact of redemption in the person and work of Jesus Christ. It is through the Bible that this saving act of God, with its antecedents and consequents, has been permanently preserved and universally diffused in human history.

(7) It is incredible that this channel of the currents of divine truth and grace unto the ends of the earth should have been fashioned by man alone. The Bible, as the literature of revelation, is so vitally connected with the revelation that we have a right to claim for it that it is inspired, and inspired in the measure in which it is the vehicle of revelation. What, then, is the nature of inspiration?

When men dispute about verbal or plenary inspiration, they seem to be contending about irrelevancies. This inspiration is first of all personal. God enlightened, quickened, renewed seer, sage, or saint through whom any part of His message came. God inspired men and not books. Their writings are inspired in so far as the men received in themselves and expressed in their utterances the Spirit of God. But these organs of God's self-revelation stood in a succession; and so in the Old Testament at least inspiration is progressive. God reveals himself more and more to men, and writings are to us inspired, as they reveal God to us. Hence the inspiration is perfect in Christ alone, for He as Son had the Spirit without measure. And the New Testament writers are for us inspired, as they stand nearer to or further off from Christ. He who gives us most of Christ in his soul is for us most inspired. The Bible is for us inspired as it inspires us—that is, as it brings Christ to us, and so fills us with the Spirit of God.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

XVIII.—THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

(1) The divine revelation before Christ was given, and the divine redemption in Him was promised to the Hebrew nation. Jesus began His ministry by gathering a company of disciples around Him, whom He taught and trained, and the memorial of Himself He left them was a social meal. It was in an assembly of believers, one in faith, hope, love, that the presence and power of the Holy Spirit was manifested at Pentecost. The outward symbol of conversion to Christ was a rite of entrance into the Christian community bearing the common witness to Him. It was not an ecclesiastical court or official who gave us the Bible; but the Old Testament canon was formed within the Jewish Church, and the New Testament canon was determined by the usage of Christian churches in their public worship. The society that collected has also from generation to generation transmitted the Sacred Scriptures. The Church, no less than the Bible has been, and still is, the channel of the preservation and diffusion among men of the Christian faith.

And, as the fellowship of the Church is necessary to Christian life, so the Church may be included among the objects of Christian belief.

(2) Protestants, in their recoil from Catholicism, and Congregationalists among Protestants especially in their emphasis on the sufficiency of each Christian congregation for the discharge of all the functions of the Christian Church, have, it is to be feared, lost the sense of the significance and value of the Christian community as one in all its parts. Modern scholarship does confirm the contention of Congregationalism that the Apostolic Churches were congregational in their organisation, and that each local assembly was regarded as a church complete in itself. But it also shows that the modern Congregational Church is not an exact copy of the Apostolic, nor, indeed, could be, as there was no absolute uniformity in the organisation of the local churches, for where the Jewish converts were in the majority, the arrangements of the synagogue were followed, but where the church was mainly composed of Gentile believers there the clubs which existed for mutual benefit among the poor of the Roman Empire were imitated. Of the former association the term elder reminds us, as of the latter the term bishop. Organisation was subordinate to inspiration, the manifestation of the Spirit's presence and power in varied gifts to be used for the common

good; for the apostles, prophets, teachers, endowed with such spiritual qualifications, formed the ministry that belonged to all the churches, while presbyters or bishops and deacons were servants of the local congregation.

In such organisation as there was, not uniformity, but adaptation to local conditions or previous associations was aimed at, and it can be said confidently that there is no single organisation which can claim to be obligatory in the Christian Church as expressive of the will of Christ for His community. The assertion of Congregational principles in trifling details, which one sometimes hears as a barrier set up in the way of all progress, has no justification in the New Testament. There are spiritual principles which are bound up with the Christian faith itself; such are the priesthood of all believers, the ministry in the Church of all the saints according to the manifold gifts the one Spirit bestows, the sufficiency for the functions of the Christian Church, the witness of the Gospel, the worship of the Father, and the work of the Kingdom of every society united in Christ's Name and possessed by His Presence. But as regards all organisation there is freedom to serve in the best way under the guidance of the Spirit. It is a hindrance and an injury to the Church when, owing to ancient custom, matters of expediency in

arrangement are made questions of principle. If the churches are to meet the claims of the changing times, and if the ideal of unity is ever to be realised, all that concerns the outward forms of the Church must be placed where the New Testament places it, as entirely subordinate to the inward spirit of dependence on, and submission to, Christ, solicitude for, and devotion to, the welfare of mankind.

(3) There is another lesson that modern scholarship is teaching the churches of to-day. If the local congregations were called churches, yet in the apostolic age they were not considered as independent of, isolated from, one another. As within each church there was a brotherhood of believers, so there was a sisterhood of churches. The New Testament speaks not only of the church in Ephesus, in Corinth, or in Jerusalem, but also of the Church of God, a unity embracing all the local churches. The ministers already spoken of—apostles, prophets, teachers—passed from church to church. The apostolic letters were another bond of union. A Christian travelling was welcomed as a brother in each Christian community to which he came. The collections made in the Gentile churches for the church in Jerusalem were an acknowledgment of the debt of the daughter churches to the Mother Church for the gift of the Gospel, and so an appeal

to that church to give up the aloofness from the Gentile churches, which under the influence of Jewish exclusiveness seems in part at least to have come upon it. The facility and security of travel within the Roman Empire did much to make possible the realisation of the ideal of unity. And there are similar conditions to-day which are forcing on the attention of divided Christendom the possibility of the realisation of this ideal of unity again. It is one of the ironies of the history of the Christian Church on earth that those sections of Christendom which are most exclusive, unchurching all other churches, claim to be alone catholic. The unity which as an ideal to be realised to-day alone claims consideration is not uniformity of creed, code, or polity, but the unity of a common faith, hope, and love, expressed in united service. In face of the hostility of the world, and in view of the urgency of the tasks at home and abroad which are waiting to be done, Christendom needs to be united and not divided. This unity will not be brought about by compromises and conferences, but only by a restored vision in all the churches of the ideal of the one Church of God on earth, and the realisation of that ideal will not require one vast, all-embracing, ecclesiastical organisation, but a larger charity and a more frequent co-operation of all the churches. Surely an article of the Christian's

creed must be the belief in such a unity of the Christian Church.

(4) Most important of all for Christian belief is the New Testament representation of the unity of Christ and His church. It is because Christ is Himself present in every local congregation that it is the Church. It is because all believers are branches in the One Vine, or members of the One Body, that all the churches are one Church. It is the relation to Christ that gives meaning to this twofold use of the term church—for the local congregation and for the totality of congregations in the world. The whole Church is one in Him by a mutual indwelling—He abiding in all believers by His grace, and all believers abiding in Him by faith so that when He is present in the local congregation, the whole Church is present with Him. The local congregations are not merely parts of the one Church, but in each part the whole Church is present with Christ, in whom alone it is one. This conception may seem to many far too subtle, but it may be pointed out that the simplest Christian faith makes a similar assumption regarding the living Christ. He is present in His perfect personality in every believer, and is not diffused throughout the whole body of believers, each receiving only a part of Him. So even as His Presence is not conditioned by space limitation and division,

the Church as His body becomes manifest in every local congregation in which He is present.

This conception is worth apprehending, because of its practical effects. Surely one of the present evils is that the individual congregations to-day exaggerate the rights of liberty and minimise the claims of responsibility to the whole body of Christ. The minister in his pulpit, the deacons in their counsels, the members in their church meeting, all act as if each had to consider himself only, or as if the local congregation had no other law than its own interests and purposes. If, however, the belief could be brought home to all that each local congregation, in its corporate capacity claiming to be Christ's Church, is in its action making visible and audible to the world around the spiritual body of Christ, surely there would be more regard for the dignity, the unity, and the efficacy of the whole Church as thus manifesting itself in the local congregation. Let each preacher say to himself: I am not in the pulpit to express my own private opinions, but to be a mouth for the Christian faith common to all Christians, which has come down through all the generations of Christian history. Let each member think not only of those enrolled with him in the same fellowship so as to be guided by their wishes, but let him realise that as a

Christian believer he is encompassed by a great cloud of witnesses, and that it is in and for the whole Christian community on earth and in heaven that he must act. If Christ be so related to His Church, as the New Testament represents, then the individual believer is not related to Him alone apart from the Christian community, but union with Christ is itself incorporation into the Christian society, with all the obligations and privileges that membership in a society involves.

(5) This is the conception of the Christian Church, united to Christ, one in Christ, present in every local congregation, to which the writer has been led by his study of the New Testament, and it is one which he very urgently commends to the consideration of his fellow-Congregationalists, for it is manifest that the "old independency" has had its day. It emphasised, and so exaggerated only one of the aspects of the New Testament representation of the Church. Related to, it may be surely regarded as superseded with, the individualism in economics and politics which we are fast leaving behind us. It asserted the truth of the words, "Every man shall bear his own burden," and ignored the truth of the other words, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." It was often more zealous of asserting its separative principles than of realizing the uniting ideal of the one Church in

Christ. That it had its relative justification in discharging a necessary function in human thought and life in a stage of man's development, when emancipation from tyranny in Church and State was the necessity, let us frankly concede, and pay our cordial tribute of gratitude to the strong men who fought this battle for us; but our own day has its own call of duty and need.

(6) We have reached a stage in human development when organisation is the watchword, an organisation which will combine liberty and order. The organic conception of human society is not only attracting the thought of philosophers, but it is also directing the efforts of reformers. Those who reject economic socialism, as the writer does, still recognise the necessity of social reform; and a social reform that has as its guiding principle that "we are all members of one another," an anticipation by the Apostle to the Gentiles of the modern social ideal. Not only is the unity of each nation thus recognised, but there is a growing internationalism; the unity of mankind is becoming less a remote, unrealisable ideal. Human society, conceived as a unity, and increasingly organised as a unity, confronts the Christian Church. The spurious claim of Roman Catholicism to offer mankind the one divine society on earth can be disowned by Protestantism only if it seeks to give to mankind the genuine reality of

the Church of Christ one in Him. The growing solidarity of mankind must have its counterpart in the growing unity of the Church of Christ, for how else than by the common testimony and common service of that Church to mankind can all the kingdoms of the world become the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ?

Fundamentales

1 Bibel,

2 Brot.

3 Gott's Kompaß,

4 ~~Das~~, Mann, Sie

5 Prager

6 Sauer